

FROM BYZANTIUM TO IRAN  
*Armenian Studies in Honour of*  
*Nina G. Garsoïan*

edited by  
Jean-Pierre Mahé  
Robert W. Thomson

Scholars Press  
Atlanta, Georgia

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Scholars Press

**Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data**

From Byzantium to Iran : Armenian studies in honour of Nina G.

Garsoïan / edited by Jean-Pierre Mahé, Robert W. Thomson.

p. cm. — (Occasional papers and proceedings / Scholars Press ;  
no. 8) (Suren D. Fesjian academic publications ; no. 5)  
English and French.

ISBN 0-7885-0152-6 (cloth : alk. paper)

1. Armenians—History. 2. Armenia—History. 3. Armenian  
philology. 4. Art, Armenan. I. Garsoïan, Nina G., 1923–  
II. Mahé, Jean-Pierre. III. Thomson, Robert W., 1934–  
IV. Series: Occasional papers and proceedings (Scholars Press) ; no.  
8. V. Series: Suren D. Fesjian academic publications ; no. 5.

DS176.F75 1997

956.6'2—dc21

96-52162

CIP

Printed in the United States of America  
on acid-free paper



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## An Ecclesiastical Analysis of the Naxarar System A Reexamination of Adontz's Chapter XII

- I. The Naxarar System and the Armenian church
- II. The Church Vis à Vis the Naxarar System
- III. Adontz and the Consiliar Lists
- IV. The Growth of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy
- V. Territorial Holdings of the Armenian Church
- Excursus I. The Albanian Church in 500
- Excursus II. The East Georgian Church in 500
- Excursus III. The Church in West Georgia

Like everything else in his magisterial *Armenia in the Period of Justinian* (1908), Nicholas Adontz's analysis of the naxarar system and its relation to the Armenian Church goes straight to the heart of the problems involved and is filled with astute observations and penetrating insight.<sup>1</sup> Again, however, like all of his seminal work, the passage of over eighty-five years has rendered certain aspects of his treatment obsolete, while, as in all his chapters, the most curious oversights occur in which rather obvious discrepancies in the material before him were either overlooked or explained in a less than completely successful way.

In his *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (1963), Toumanoff made a significant contribution to Armenian scholarship by taking major portions of Adontz's book and revising and updating the material they

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<sup>1</sup> This work can now be used only in conjunction with its annotated Engl. trans. by N.G. Garsoïan (hence: Adontz-Garsoïan).

contained. It is to be regretted, however, that Toumanoff's interests did not extend to Adontz's analysis of the naxarar system and the Armenian church, a chapter which, written early in the twentieth century, merits reassessment as much as any other section of his landmark study. Not until Nina G. Garsoïan translated Adontz into English in 1970 (hereinafter: Adontz-Garsoïan) was his work on the Church first critiqued and his contribution to the study of ancient Armenian ecclesiastical history recognized. Adontz remarks, for example, that the "best index of the relative might of the principalities . . . is found in their territorial relationships. Unimportant principalities are those whose possessions were included in larger princely territories. With few exceptions, the former are the very principalities which lack representatives in the ecclesiastical hierarchy" (Adontz-Garsoïan, 288). This important observation, however, cannot be allowed to pass so simply for the issue is much more complicated than Adontz seems to appreciate. Since Toumanoff has completely revised and reworked Adontz's survey of the princely houses, a comparison of his revised list with the episcopal sees in question cannot help but be instructive.

### **I. The Naxarar System and the Church**

The most fundamental feature of ancient Armenian society is the fact that it was dominated by a nobiliary class based on the existence of a large number of sovereign principalities ruled by their own dynastic princes, living on vast, rural estates, rather than being an urban society based on large municipal centers such as existed in the Roman and Byzantine Empires. Thus, Christian Armenia developed an ecclesiastical system in which bishops, instead of being appointed to cities, as they were in the Empire, were attached to the individual princely houses rather as court prelates. As Adontz noted, by the fifth century, bishops had been appointed to all of the major Armenian princely houses, and those families which did not, for whatever reason, merit their own prelates would obviously have been the lesser ones. According to this observation, it logically follows that if we were to match the list of the episcopal sees against a list of the princely houses, the two lists should largely coincide, and where they do not do so an explanation should be readily forthcoming. Curiously, no one until now has attempted such a comparison of these two basic institutions of Christian Armenia—its princely houses and its ecclesiastical sees—and it is the purpose of this study to attempt at least a modest beginning in this direction.

Now whether or not the system whereby the Armenian Church appointed bishops to the major principalities developed gradually from the time of St. Gregory, as asserted by Agathangelos (cxxxiii) or was really completed by Chief Bishop Nersēs as the *Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk'* (V. 21), (hereinafter BP) implies, Adontz has shown that the system was already in place by the time of council of Artasat of 450, and fully developed by that of the second Council of Duin convened in 555. Here we offer the complete list of the Armenian episcopal sees grouped according to the order in which they appear in the successive consiliar lists. In this list, the number following the names of the various bishoprics is that of the corresponding princely house in the following list.

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Before 350: | 1. Tarawn (18)   |
|             | 2. Ayrarat (40)  |
| By 450:     | 3. Siwnik' (25)  |
|             | 4. Arcruni (8)   |
|             | 5. Rštunik' (23)   |
|             | 6. Manjkert ( <i>sic</i> )   |
|             | 7. Bagrewand (9)   |
|             | 8. Bznunik' (34)   |
|             | 9. Basean (or Mardalik')   |
|             | 10. Mardastan ( <i>Mardpetakan</i> or <i>Sep'akan</i> )                |
|             | 11. Vanand (28)  |
|             | 12. Mokk' (20)   |
|             | 13. Anjewac'ik' (4)  |
|             | 14. Tayk' (18)   |
|             | 15. Turuberan (17)   |
|             | 16. Mananali   |
|             | 17. Amatuni (3)  |
|             | 18. Apahunik' (5)  |
| By 505:     | 19. Aršamunik' (19)  |
|             | 20. Palunik' (21)  |
|             | 21. Gnumik' (14)   |
|             | 22. Zarēhawan (52)   |
|             | 23. T'morik' (Korduk' (21), i.e. Arzon or Syria [1]) (35) <sup>2</sup> |
|             | 24. Mehnunik'  |
| By 555:     | 25. Aršarunik' (16)  |

<sup>2</sup> For the identification of the two Syrian eparchies see *infra*.

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
|         | 26. Goł'n (10)                                       |
|         | 27. Akē (2)  |
| By 607: | 28. Ełi  |
|         | 29. Arnay (or Rotak)                                 |
| By 726: | *30. Sanasunk' (the "Other" Syria [II]) <sup>2</sup> |

\*Since Mananali disappears from the lists after its single appearance in 450, and Arnay/Rotak, as we shall see, is obviously identical to the earlier Zarēhawan, the total number of dioceses by 726 was twenty-eight rather than thirty.

We now follow with a list of the princely houses of Armenia, not as found in Adontz (who critically examined the various lists of princes which have come down to us but who still exaggerated their number), but as corrected by Toumanoff (192–252) after a more precise reading of the sources. Here the numbers following the names in the list of principalities are those of the corresponding episcopal sees listed above:<sup>3</sup>

1. Arsacids (2)
2. Akē (27)
3. Amatuni (17)
4. Anjewac'i (13)
5. Apahuni (18)
6. Aravelean
7. Aravenean
8. Arcruni (4)
9. Bagratuni (7)
10. Goł'n (26)
11. Dimak'sean (Princes of Bołxa)
12. Eruandunik'
13. Gnt'uni
14. Gnuni (21)
15. K'ajberuni
16. Kamsarakan or Aršaruni (25)
17. Xorxoruni (15)
18. Mamikonean (14)

<sup>2</sup> For the identification of the two Syrian eparchies see *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> For the location of these and other Armenian princely houses see Toumanoff, *ibid*.

19. Mandakuni (19)
20. Mokk' (12)
21. Paluni (20)
22. Rop'sean
23. Rštuni (5)
24. Saharuni
25. Siwni (3)
26. Słkuni
27. Vahevuni
28. Vanand (11)
29. Adiabēnē
30. Arjn (or Aļjnik')
31. Hašteank'
32. Bagean
33. Balahovit
34. Bznuni (8)
35. Korduk' (23)
36. Jorop'or
37. \*Gardman (I)
38. \*Gardman (II)
39. Gugark'
40. Gregorids (2)
41. Habužean
42. Angel-tun/Hanjit
43. Kołbap'or
44. Kołt'
45. Mahkert
46. Manawazean
47. Marpetakan (10)
48. Orduni
49. Uti
50. Greater Copk'
51. Lesser Copk'
52. Cawdk'
53. Zarawand (*Zarēhawan*) and Hēr (22)
54. Abelean
55. Ašoc'
56. Daštakaran, princes of Šakašēn

57. Jiwnakan
58. Ėnsayac'i (princes of Anjaxijor)
59. Gabelean
60. Hawenuni
61. Koľean
62. Spanduni
63. Sruanjit
64. Tařir
65. Trpatuni/Truni
66. Urc
67. Varařnunik'
- \*\*[68]. Gargarac'ik'

\*Gardman was ruled by two successive dynasties.

\*\*Not included in Toumanoff's list but a very real house nevertheless (for which see MX, II.8).

A comparison of these two lists leads us to the following two observations:

1) Of the twenty-seven episcopal sees in existence in Armenia by 555, no less than twenty correspond to princely houses; seven do not.

2) However, of the sixty-seven princely houses identified by Toumanoff as having existed in Arsacid Armenia (plus the Gargarac'ik', whom he does not cite, making sixty-eight), only twenty-three correspond to the episcopal sees; forty-five have no corresponding episcopal sees.

Now in a system so obviously based on the appointment of bishops to principalities, we must expect to be able to explain any divergences from the norms of the system. This we shall now attempt to do. The explanations for the missing sees divide themselves logically into seven categories in which the sees will now be numbered 1 through 45:

1) Five of the forty-five bishopless princely houses of Armenia have no corresponding episcopal sees in the Armenian consiliar lists simply because they had left the orbit of Armenia in 298 (before the conversion of Armenia to Christianity some fifteen years later), in which year, through the terms of the Treaty of Nisibis, they became parts of the Roman Empire. These houses, numbered separately from their enumeration in the above list, are those of 1) Lesser Cop'k', 2) Angeltun-Hanjit, 3) Greater Cop'k', 4) Ajnik' and 5) Korduk'. But even here, all five of these



principalities did in fact possess their own bishops. Their sees were simply established within the framework of the imperial church rather than within that of Armenia and were—*modo romano-byzantino*—ultimately attached to urban centers. Thus, in the fifth century, we hear of bishops of Sophēnē (Arm.: *Lesser Cop'k*), Greater Sophēnē or Sophanēnē (*Greater Cop'k*), Ingilēnē-Anzitēnē (*Angeltun-Hanjit*) all attending the Council of Chalcedon in 451, and also of bishops of Bēth Arzon (*Ałjnik'*) and Bēth Qardu (*Korduk'*) as prelates of the East Syrian (Nestorian) church under the jurisdiction of the Syrian Metropolitan of Nisibis. This latter situation was, of course, the logical result of Ałjnik' and Korduk', acquired by Rome in 298 (PP 14/189), having been ceded back to Persia in 363 (AM 25.7.9), an event which severed these eparchies from the Imperial church and which led them to become Nestorian sees after the Council of Ephesus condemned Nestorianism as a heresy in 431.<sup>4</sup>

2) The principalities of 6) Hašteank' (*Asthianēnē*) and 7) Balahovit (*Balabitēnē*) were ceded to Rome by Armenia in c. 371 or, more exactly, their princes transferred their allegiance from the Armenian king to the Roman emperor at that time.<sup>5</sup> Thus, they too do not appear in the lists of Armenian episcopal sees, their bishops also being within the jurisdiction of the imperial church.

3) The principalities of 8) Gardman, 9) Šakašēn (*Sakasēnē*, of the princes Daštakaran), 10) Utik' (*Otēnē*), 11) Gargarac'ik' (*Gargaroi*), 12) Kol't' (*Kolthēnē*) and 13) Cawdk' (*Sodoukēnē*) or Arc'ax (*Orkhistēnē*), had all passed to Albania in 387 (BP IV.50). Such bishops as existed in these regions—and we are poorly informed about them—would have officiated within the framework of the Albanian church, which, while subordinate to that of Armenia, was separately administered under its own chief bishop (later styled *katholikos*), and whose bishops did not normally attend Armenian ecclesiastical conclaves.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> For a description of these territories and their transfer back and-forth, see Toumanoff (1963) and Hewsén (1992).

<sup>5</sup> AM (XXX.ii.4–5), where he does not mention the principalities but where, from the context, it is clear that Balahovit and Hašteank' are intended (Toumanoff, 171).

<sup>6</sup> The relatively few bishops in Albania are cited by MD, where it is clear that the Albanian Church conducted its own local councils without Armenian participation, and that its bishops did not participate in councils outside of their own homeland. Thus, the Armenian church communicated with the subordinate church of Albania by means of letters. So much so was this the case that Markwart (1966:308) believed that "Gardman" in this list was an error for something else and this, of course, is possible.

4) Similarly, 14) the Mihranid princes of Gugark' had passed to the obedience of the king of Iberia in 387 (BP IV.50), and its bishop, probably serving also the Gušarid principalities of 15) Jorap'or and 16) Kolbap'or (both offshoots of the earlier Gušarid dynasty of Gugark'), would have been included within the hierarchy of the Iberian church. In the same way, if 17) the princes of Tašir, a branch of the Mihranids of Gugark', had their own bishop, his see would have lain within the jurisdiction of the Iberian church as well. As a matter of fact, however, the Iberian church was organized quite differently from that of Armenia (*infra*, Excursus II). Instead of being assigned to the princely houses of the land, the bishops of Iberia, no doubt because the country was far smaller and less mountainous, and because its nobility was thus more squarely under the thumb of the monarchy, were appointed—on the imperial model—either to towns or to the great monasteries. To this category, also, we may include 18) the vitaxas (military viceroys) of Adiabēnē (Arm.: *Nihorakan*), who, whatever house they may have belonged to, had passed from Armenian to direct Persian rule by 387, along with (19) the princes of Mahkert-tun (BP, *ibid.*).

5) A number of other princely houses which had no corresponding bishops may be accounted for because, while obviously princely in origin, they did not rule over principalities *per se*, but rather were the possessors of great estates within the royal domains of Ayrarat. These princely families include the houses of 20) Aravelean, 21) Arevenean, 22) Gnt'uni, 23) Rop'sean and 24) Spanduni. Similarly, 25) the two lands held by the Dimakseans were located, respectively, in the principalities of Tayk' and Širak, while those of 26) the Saharuni, centered in the town of Mren, were located either in Sirak or—as it now appears—perhaps in Vanand. In cases such as these, the princely houses in question appear to have “shared”, as it were, the services of the bishops appointed to the houses within whose lands their own properties lay. Such princes, whatever their origins, would have been direct vassals either of the king, in the first five cases, or of, respectively, the princes of Tayk', and of Širak (or, in the latter case, perhaps of Vanand) in the last two. After the fall of the monarchy in 428, the princes dwelling in the former royal domains would have passed under the overlordship of whomever inherited these lands, *i.e.*, the various branches of the house of Kamsarakan or the church.

6) A few other houses do not appear represented in the episcopal lists for the simple reason that they seem to have disappeared before the episcopal system native to Armenia had become fully developed. These would include the houses of 27) Manawazean, princes of Hark', and 28) the Orduni, princes of Basean (or Basēn), both exterminated in the mid-fourth century, (*BP* III.4; *MX* III.2) and perhaps also those of the 29) Vahevuni, erstwhile high priests of the pagan religious establishment, and 30) the trouble-making Słkunis, the first of whom survived until the tenth century (*TA* II.6; III.2) and the latter until the fifth (Elisaeus 5) but both of whom had suffered dispossession for different reasons in the fourth. It is likely that the Vahevunis and the Słkunis, once having lost their ancestral principalities, would have been recompensed with lands within other principalities; in the case of the Vahevuni, perhaps within the royal domains; in the case of the Słkuni, perhaps in Tarawn, the eastern half of which had been theirs before their ruin (III.84).

7) Finally, having successfully disposed of so many of the discrepancies—30 out of the 45—between the lists of the princely houses and those of the bishops appointed to them, we must deal with a seventh group consisting of those princely houses whose lack of a corresponding episcopal see is not so readily explained. It will be best to treat these houses not as a single group but rather as a series of sub-groups and individual cases:

a. The princes 31) Abełeank', 32) Gabełeank' and 33) Hawenunik' appear only after the fall of the Arsacid monarchy in 428 and were offshoots or cadet branches of the house of Kamasarakan or Aršarunik' (Toumanoff, 220–21). Accordingly, their ecclesiastical requirements would continue to have been met by the prelate appointed to the senior line of their house, the bishop of Aršarunik', while their corresponding principalities must have formed, together with Arsarunik', a single diocese. As for 34) the princes Jiwnakan, they, too, appear only after the fall of the Arsacid monarchy and may have been either one of its direct vassals or one of its cadet branches. In any case, the house of Jiwnakan is last cited in 555 (*555 Acts*, Adontz-Garsoian, 97\*).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Since Bagrewand appears in the list of 450 but not in that of 505, and Aršarunik' in the list of 505 but not in 450, while both appear in that of 555, Adontz (Adontz-Garsoian, 209) thought that Bagrewand and Aršarunik' were identical sees listed in 450 and 505 under their alternative names and that they had been separated into two

b. 35) The Princes K'ajberuni, although possessing, as Toumanoff (206) has already noted, a name bespeaking an immemorial origin, do not appear in history until after the fall of the monarchy and seem to have been an offshoot of one of the earlier houses. The fact that the K'ajberuni held the earlier land of (western) Aġiovit upon which they imposed their name, suggests that they may have been a branch of the house of Gnuni, which had held this land before them (*BP* III.12; 4, 2, 11) and which was equally ancient of days. First heard of in connection with the Vardananc' War of 451 (*LP* 39; *Elisaeus* 5), the Princes K'ajberuni probably shared the bishop of the princely house within whose lands their own estates were to be found—in this case, perhaps in Gnunid Aġiovit, which had become a part of the royal lands, so that the later K'ajberunik' was probably under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Ayrarat, *i.e.*, of the katholikos, himself.

c. 36) The house of Eruanduni (the Orontids), descended from the first royal dynasty of Armenia and one of its oldest princely houses, disappears from history in the Vardananc' War (Toumanoff, 204). While this explains its absence from the later consiliar lists it does not answer the question as to why it had no representative at the Council of Artašat held before the war began. The only possible explanation for this is that the Eruanduni lands must not have formed a distinct principality but rather must have lain within the domains of another princely house. In my opinion, the Eruandunis may have held the district which bore their name (*i.e.* Eruandunik' southwest of Lake Van), a district which probably lay within the principality of the Rštuni family, whose nuclear domain included, not only Rštunik' itself, at the southwest corner of the lake, but also the city of Van (Toumanoff, 213). Eruandunik', lying as it did between these two points, probably formed a part of the Rštunid realm as well. The fact that the Eruanduni family was of royal origin had perhaps led the later Artaxiad and Arsacid dynasties of Armenia to deliberately keep the house in a subordinate position among the other princely houses of Armenia. Here, however, we are only speculating, but I believe that I have at least proffered a plausible explanation as to why the Eruandunis are not represented by a bishop of their own at the council of Artašat in 450.

d. 37) The princes Habužean and 38) Bagean are cited but once each in connection with events which took place c. 361 (*BP* 4.11). They, too, must have disappeared before the establishment of the episcopal system in

Armenia in the following century. Their lands, such as they were, may also have lain in one of the territories lost to Armenia between 363 and 387.

e. 39) Ašoc', one of the districts of Gugark', became a separate principality in the mid-fifth century some decades after the latter was lost by Armenia in 387 (*BP* IV.50). It is possible that in ecclesiastical matters it was subject to the East Georgian (Iberian) chief bishop as were the other districts of Gugark' which had passed to Iberia in 387. On the other hand, the fact that the geographical work of Ananias of Širak (AŠX) includes Ašoc' within Armenia suggests that Ašoc', at least until 387, lay within the domains of the katholikos of Armenia himself.

f. 40) The princes of Urc (or Urcajor) "Urc Valley" and those of the houses of 41) Varažnuni, 42) Sruanjit and 43) Kołean all first appear after the fall of the monarchy (Toumanoff, 221–22). Since all of these held lands in Ayrarat, the former royal domain, it is likely that these were cadet branches of the Arsacids or of some other related house. The fact that they had no bishops of their own suggests that their ecclesiastical needs were supplied directly by the katholikos of Armenia in whose jurisdiction those royal domains which had into passed to the house of Kamsarakan-Aršarunik' probably remained. On the other hand, it is not impossible that the Varažnuni were a late offshoot of one of the houses residing north of Lake Van (where one of the three districts called Varažnunik' was located) and that the bishop of that house included the principality of Varažnunik' within his jurisdiction.

g. Finally, we come to 44) the houses of Ėnc'ayac'i (or *Anjaxijor*), and of 45) Atrpatuni (*Trpatuni* or *Truni*), both of whose lands were located in the mountainous area to the east of Lake Van (Toumanoff, 220–21; Eremyan: map). The first was probably a cadet line of the house of Mardpetakan (whose bishop it would have shared). It is heard of only in connection with the Vardananc' War (ŁP 23,39; Elisaeus 4). The second formed a small house between the principalities of Anjewac'ik' and Mokk' (Eremyan, 1963: map). It was probably an offshoot of one of these houses, and, if so, would have shared the bishop of its senior line. In both cases, history has accorded these principalities little importance.

We have thus accounted for every family which did not have a bishop of its own. In each case, we can either know or surmise the reason for the absence of a dynastic prelate in the ecclesiastical lists. Paraphrasing and qualifying Adontz's original statement, our best guide to the relative

importance of the various principalities—after the loss of the border provinces of Armenia in the years 298–387—is the ecclesiastical arrangement. Important princely houses have their own bishops assigned to them by the Armenian church. Those princely families of post-Arsacid Armenia which did not have bishops of their own were 1) lesser houses whose lands lay within the principalities of the larger ones and had no principalities of their own, or 2) those that were simply offshoots of other houses.

## II. The Church vis à vis the Naxarar System

Having examined the list of Armenian princely houses to determine which did and which did not have their own bishops appointed to them in the hierarchy of the Armenian church, we may now find it profitable to reverse the process and examine the list of episcopal sees to determine which of these were not assigned to specific families. Apart from the *katholikos*, himself, who had originally been court bishop to the Armenian kings and hence, *ipso facto* the bishop of the Arsacid royal house (corresponding to the Vahevuni high priests of pagan Armenia), and who had survived the fall of the monarchy in both his capacities as bishop of the former royal domains of Ayrarat and as chief bishop of Armenia, there are only seven Armenian eparchies that fall into this category.

Of the seven, the bishops of 1) Ehi and 2) Arnay are easily accounted for. Both of them are late sees, first appearing at the council of 607, and were centered at the monasteries of the same names (Adontz-Garsoïan, 261). Lying outside of Armenia, in the lands west of Lake Urmia that had been lost in 387, they are obviously monastic sees of the kind so common in East Georgia, *i.e.* monasteries raised to the rank of episcopal sees in order that their abbots might minister, it would seem, to the ecclesiastical needs of the Armenian population of, respectively, southern and northern Parskahayk' (Markwart, "Parskahayk'", *passim*). Cut off from the rest of Armenia since the late fourth century and bereft of their former rulers, the princes of Zarawand-Hēr, there were no princely houses to which these prelates could be assigned. Here we may see an early example of what was to become so common in later centuries: the Armenian ecclesiastical establishment taking the place of a defunct Armenian political authority. The remaining four sees in this category might best be addressed one at a time:

3) The see of Manjkert, *i.e.*, of the town of Manazkert found in the consiliar list of 450, is, as Adontz points out (Adontz-Garsoïan, 259), to be identified with the see of Hark' which replaces it in the lists of 505 and 555, Manazkert (Tk.: *Malazgird*) being the administrative center of the old Manawazean principality of Hark', whose house had become extinct in the fourth century and whose lands had been granted to the church. Thus, the bishop of Hark', who might otherwise have been assigned to the Manawazean family, was appointed instead to its ancestral seat, the municipality of Manazkert—a rare example of an Armenian bishop being designated to an episcopal see tied directly to a particular urban center as was the usual practice in the Romano-Byzantine Empire. Later of course, beginning in the tenth century, the appointment of Armenian bishops to specific cities became common but Manazkert and Naxčawan (where the bishop of the Mardpetakan resided until the Arab period) were the only such urban sees until at least the ninth.

4) Basean or Mardali. This see comprised two districts and, referred to by either of their names (Adontz-Garsoïan, 260), was in the same situation as that of Hark'. Formerly the domain of the Princes Orduni, who had become extinct at the same time as the Manwazeans and under the same circumstances (*BP* III.2), their lands, too, had passed to the Armenian church (*BP* III.4). Hence, this see likewise had no princely family to whom the bishop could be appointed and whose bishop thus took the prince's place. This prelate probably resided at some monastery or other for there was no particular municipality serving as a continuous center for Basean or Mardali. While, occasionally, the two districts were presided over by a single bishop, from time to time each had a bishop of its own (Adontz-Garsoïan, 260). In my list, however, contrary to Adontz, I have counted Basean and Mardali as a single see.

5) Mananali presents a bit of a puzzle. As I have pointed out elsewhere, and I admit perhaps too forcefully (Hewsen, 1985), the presence of a bishop of Mananali at the Council of Artasat in 450, but not at the two councils of Duin held in 505 and 555, suggests that while this district was still a part of Armenia at the time of the first of these three conclaves, *i.e.* that it was not part of the kingdom of Aršak III annexed by the Romans upon his death in c. 390. It may not have passed to Imperial control—where we find it in the *AŠX* as a part of Byzantine Armenia—until just before the second Council of Duin was convened. This transfer of territory as I have suggested, would most likely have occurred during

the reign of the Emperor Leo (457–474), who renamed its chief town (originally Vžan; Gk: *Sana* or *Bazanis*) *Leontopolis* after himself (Justinian, *Novels*, xxxi,I).

Now Mananali, as far as we know, had no princely house of its own. Lying next to Derjan, however, with its great temple at Bagayarič, it may well have belonged to the temple's estates and so have formed part of the numerous temple-lands of pre-Christian Armenia. In this case, like all the possessions of the pagan religious establishment, Mananali would have passed to the Gregorids as lands of the church after Armenia had become a Christian state, and then to their heirs, the Mamikonids (whose bishop it would then have shared), or directly to the Armenian church.

6) The diocese of Mehnunik' presents a particularly difficult problem. Not only do we appear to have little information regarding a princely house of this name, but even as a toponym, Mehnunik' seems to be unknown to Armenian historical geography. It is not mentioned in the *AŠX per se*, and Eremyan (1963) ignores it as an Armenian district. Yet, for all this, the see of Mehnunik' is well attested being found in all of the consiliar lists from 505 to 726 (Adontz-Garsoïan, chap. XII), while its supposed princes are mentioned by ZG (p. 48), the *Gahnamak* (Adontz-Garsoïan, 68\*), the *Military Register* (ibid., 69\*), the pseudo-*Gahnamak*, (ibid., 71\*) and in the *Book of Letters* (*Girk' T'ltoc'*, hereinafter: BL). Although, with the exception of the last, these texts citing the princes Mehnunik' are all late and unreliable, it is difficult to escape the impression that there really was such a princely house (though ignored by Toumanoff, *index*), although such variant forms as *Mehenuni(k')* (Council of 555) and *Mehrunik'* (pseudo-*Gahnamak*) leave us in some doubt as to the exact spelling of its name.

Despite its errors and its dubious character, the *Military Register* just cited seems to offer us at least a clue as to where to look for the lands possessed by this house and this is the only clue that we have. In dividing all of the princely houses of Armenia into four fictitious "armies", each fictitiously guarding a different "gate" (i.e. quadrant) of the Arsacid realm, this text cites the Mehnunik' as small house, supplying but 100 cavalry to the king, located in the "southern Gate" together with a number of other houses—twenty-one to be exact—most of which are known to have dwelled in the region between the south shore of Lake Van and the Arax River. The clear inference is that we are to search for the Mehnuni lands in this region.



Now it is interesting to note that among the thirty-five-odd names of districts cited by the AŠX for the land of Vaspurakan—which between 591 and the coming of the Arabs occupied this precise area of southern Armenia—is a certain Mecnunik', for which Hübschman (345) cites the variants *Mecunik'*, *Vznunik'* and—precisely—*Mehnunik'*.<sup>8</sup> Here then, in the *Mecnunik'* of the AŠX, is to be found the mysterious and elusive domain of the Mehnuni house. But where exactly did Mehnunik'/Mecnunik' lie, and who, exactly, were its princes?

From T'A (III.29)—who also calls the district *Mecnunik'*—we learn that this district lay in the northwestern half of the land of Vaspurakan, and Eremyan (1963: map) places it more exactly in the upper valley of the little Marmet River northeast of Lake Arč'išak. I see no reason to doubt his judgment here. More interesting, however, is the fact that on the west he has Mecnunik' contiguous with the district of Palunik', whose location is assured by the existence here of the modern Turkish village of Poğanis (USAF AAC Van 340 B IV), a name going back to the late Armenian \**Polanc'* and ultimately to an earlier \**Palunank'* and an even earlier \**Palunik'*. As Toumanoff (212) has shown, the Princes Paluni, descended it would appear, from the chieftains of the pre-Armenian Pala (*Bala*) people of Assyrian records, and originally holding the land to the northwest of Tarawn, were at some time dispossessed by the Mamikonids (probably after they had acquired Tarawn through inheritance from the Gregorids in 438), and a branch of them, if not the entire family, must have settled in this other region in Vaspurakan to which they then gave their name. As Adontz and Toumanoff have both demonstrated, an Armenian princely house bearing the name of a particular district need not have owned that district alone but often held it merely as the nucleus of a much larger domain—the principality, itself—comprising several districts to which the nuclear district would give its name. Thus, we can see from Eremyan's map (1963), how the three districts of Bodunik', Palunik' and Mecnunik' formed a natural geographical unit lying in the Marmet valley between the principality of Arberani on the north, that of Rštunik' (with Eruandunik') on the south, that of Mardpetakan on the East and the shore of Lake Van on the west. It is interesting in this connection, that Thomas Arcruni (*ibid.*), listing the districts of

<sup>8</sup> For the relevant passages in the long and the short recensions of the AŠX, see the new printing of the 1881 edition of the long recension of this text and the 1944 edition of the short one (Caravan Press, 1994, with an introduction by R.H. Hewsen).

northeastern Vaspurakan, links Palunik' and Mecnunik' with a *ew* 'and' in the middle of his list, while in the AŠX (long recension) the two districts are either listed side by side (short version) or Palunik' alone is cited (long version). To my mind, this unity—Bodunik', Palunik' and Mecnunik'—must have formed a single principality under a branch of the Paluni family, which, after its removal to this part of Armenia, was perhaps known as the house of Mehnuni to distinguish it from the Paluni of Palunik' near Tarawn (a branch of which may have survived under Mamikonid rule in their original domains), and there may have a separate bishop for each Palunik' just as the Mamikonids had separate bishops for each of their two major holdings, Tayk' and Tarawn. The simultaneous appearance of bishops of Palunik' and Mehnunik'; among the six new sees represented at the Council of Duin II likewise suggests a connection between the two.

7) Finally, we come to Sanasunk' or the "Other" Syria (Syria II) but this is a late see first appearing at the Council of Manazkert in 726. It therefore falls into a special category and will be discussed below.

Thus, with the identification of the district of Mehnunik' with the Mecnunik' of the AŠX (the latter form, *pace* Hübschmann and Eremyan, being probably incorrect), and its ruling family with a branch of the ancient Paluni house, we appear to have successfully concluded our work. All of the loose ends have been reasonably accounted for, and the lists of the Armenian princely houses and of the Armenian episcopal sees have been generally reconciled.

### III. Adontz and the Consiliar Lists

In analyzing the growth and composition of the episcopal sees in early medieval Armenia, Adontz, as we have seen, draws upon the lists of the bishops who attended four Armenian church councils, lists which, taken together, are as close to a definitive tally of the eparchies of the country that we are ever likely to attain. These four lists are those of the Councils of Artasat (450), the first and second Councils of Duin (of, respectively, 505 and 555) and that of Manazkert (726). One other list, though incomplete in itself, that of the third Council of Duin (607), is also drawn upon by Adontz for it yields the names of two further eparchies, those of Efi and Arnay, not previously known (Adontz-Garsoïan, 262, 98\*). Let us examine what Adontz has drawn from all of this data.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> For the texts of these lists, see Adontz-Garsoïan, Chapt. XII and pp. 93\*–102\*.

1) The first curiosity of Adontz's analysis is his inaccurate enumeration of the sees involved. Although his list of 450 shows nineteen episcopal sees, Adontz (*ibid.*, 259) refers to them as eighteen in number and persistently undercounts by one the number of eparchies in all of the lists throughout the discussion whenever their number is mentioned. The only explanation for this—and Adontz does not provide one—is that he is not counting the *katholikosate* as an episcopal see even though this is unwarranted inasmuch as the *katholikos* (as the chief bishop of Armenia had come to be titled by the mid-fifth century) did, in fact, administer a see of his own like any other bishop in the country. In my discussion here, the *katholikosal* see will always be included in the enumeration of the ecclesiastical provinces of Armenia.

2) Second, there exists a curious feature in the list of 450 which appears to have escaped Adontz's attention. This is the fact that of all the prelates present at the Council of Artasat that year, only one, Zawen, Bishop of Mananali, comes from a district of Armenia usually taken to have been annexed by Rome together with the rest of the kingdom of Western Armenia of King Aršak III after the latter's death c. 390. As I have indicated above, the presence of the bishop of Mananali at this council held in Armenia proper, together with certain other indications, seems to suggest that Mananali had remained a part of Armenia after 390 (Hewsen, 1985), and only became a part of Roman Armenia—where we find it in the seventh-century *AŠX*—somewhat later. As I have suggested, the date of this acquisition by the Empire would probably have been sometime in the reign of the Emperor Leo (457–474), when, as we have seen above, its chief center, Vžan, was renamed *Leontopolis*. It is possible, of course, that the bishop of Mananali was simply attending the council as a visiting prelate, there having been no separation between the Armenian and the Universal Church at the time that the council took place. On the other hand, the absence of any other Armenian bishops from imperial territory at any other Armenian council certainly suggests that such visitations were not common practice. The question remains moot.

3) Also, while Adontz indicates that the list of 450, as presented to us by ŁP(23), should contain the see of Mardali found in the corresponding list in the text of Elisaeus (2), he makes no mention of the curious fact that, just as the bishop of Mardali is missing in ŁP, so the bishop of Mananali is missing in Elisaeus. There is no question, of course, that the

two sees are separate, for in the two sources each is represented by bishop with a different name, Zawen of Mananahi in the list of LP and Eulalius (*Evlal*) of Mardahi in that of Elisaeus, but the absence of one of these eparchies in one list and the absence of the other in the second suggests that Elisaeus, who wrote in the sixth century, may have been *correcting* LP, entering the missing Eulalius of Mardahi, whom he realized had been omitted, but dropping Zawen whose see no longer lay in Armenia proper, and which Elisaeus may have thought to have been cited by LP as an error for Mardahi.

4) The sees of Siwnik', Vanand, Mardahi and Apahunik' are missing in the text of the list of 505 but Adontz restores them in parentheses, clearly on the grounds that if the sees existed in 450 and 555, then they must have done so in 505 as well. In this one can only concur. The actual non-existence of a see like Siwnik' is unthinkable—it was the largest in Armenia after that of the katholikos—and the absence of its bishop or at least of his representative at the Council of 505 is equally unlikely. Obviously, of course, many bishops would have been very elderly and for reasons of age or ill health would not have been able to attend a given council and there is thus no reason to believe that the list of attendees at any of the councils, no matter how important it may have been, represents the true total number of episcopal sees in existence at any given time. Still, we would certainly expect a see as important as that of Siwnik' to be represented at every council even if only by a representative of its bishop.

5) In Adontz's discussion of the differences between the lists of 505 and 555, a few remarks are also in order. Since two bishops of Bagrewand are listed as being of the council, Tirak and Markos, Adontz (Adontz-Garsoïan, 467, n, 19), assumes that one is an error, and that this second bishop of Bagrewand must represent the see of Bznunik' (otherwise missing from the list of 555, even though the eparchy was represented in 450 and 505). He opts to replace the second bishop of Bagrewand with that of Bznunik'. He then goes on to note the names of seven bishops who we know were living at that time but who were not at the council; according to the *BL*, these were the bishops of the Amatunik' (*i.e.* of Artaz), Rštunik', Mokk', Akē, Zarēhawan and Bžnunik' (*sic*). What he misses, however, is that the bishop of Bžnunik' of the *BL* is the missing bishop of Bznunik' in the list of 555, so that he replaces the second bishop of Bagrewand, Markos, with the bishop of Bznunik' and

adds the bishop of Bžnunik' of the *BL* as representing a new eparchy. Obviously, the Bishop of Bznunik' and Bžnunik' are identical. Since the bishop of Bžnunik' of *BL* is named Acatur, however, he cannot be substituted for Markos of Bagrewand. In his discussion (Adontz-Garsoïan, 258–60), explaining his reasoning, however, Adontz allows that this second bishop of Bagrewand could represent Tayk' just as well as Bznunik', and this explanation is surely the one to be preferred, for Tayk' does not appear in the list of 555. Markos of Bagrewand must be Markos of *Tayk'*. Thus, omitting the phantom Bžnunik' but inserting the seven sees known to have been absent from the council of Duin II, we arrive at twenty-seven eparchies existing in Armenia by 555 rather than the twenty-eight of Adontz; omitting the bishop of Mananañi, who doesn't appear after 450, the total number of sees is further reduced to twenty-six. The Bishops of Eli and Arnay found in the list of 607 (both, of which, as we have seen, were attached to monasteries to the west of Lake Urmia and were obviously established for the spiritual succor of the Armenians now living outside of Armenia for over 200 years), bring the total number of Armenian ecclesiastical provinces to twenty-eight by that year. No further sees then make their appearance until the Arab period when, as we shall see, we find one new eparchy represented at the council of Manazkert held at the behest of the Katholikos John of Ōjun in 726. Thereafter, new sees begin to appear outside of Armenia proper (Antioch, Edessa, Sebasteia, etc.) as more and more Armenians leave their homeland to escape Arab oppression.

6) An interesting feature of the *Acts* of the council of Duin I (505/6) and those of Duin II (555) that is ignored by Adontz is the fact that the names of the princes who attended the two councils are included as well as those of the attending bishops. The lists of the princes appearing at each of the two councils are worth examining.

DUIN I. Comparing the list of princes who attended Duin I with that of the bishops sitting at the same council, we find that four families were represented by princes but not by bishops. One of these families, the house of Kamsarakan, must have been represented by the katholikos, himself, in his capacity of bishop of Ayrarat. Two others, the houses of Vahevuni and Aravelean, probably hailed from Ayrarat as well and so would have also been represented by the katholikos. The presence of a representative of the remaining family, the house of Daštakaran, is much less easy to explain for its principality, Šakašen, lay in the far eastern part

of Armenia along the River Kur that had passed to Albanian control in 387. What was the prince of Šakašēn doing at the council of Duin in 505? The only reasonable explanations are either that 1) the Daštakarans, while maintaining themselves in Šakašēn, owned other lands in Armenia proper, 2) that a Prince Daštakaran attended the council as an observer representing the Princes of Albania (but why send a prince rather than an Albanian prelate?), or 3) that the prince in question was visiting Armenia for some reason or other and his presence at the council was purely as a guest. None of these explanations is very convincing and the question must remain moot.

Similarly, when we examine the list of bishops present at Duin II in 555 we find that several were not accompanied by princes of the houses to which they were attached. Setting aside the lands that we know were princeless by this time (Hark'-Manjkert *sic*, Bznunik', and Basean-Mardalik'), the principalities unrepresented by princes include the two Arcrunid domains of Albak and Mardpetakan, and the principalities of Mokk', Anjewac'ik', Mehnunik', Aršamunik' and Tmorik'. If Mehnunik' was a Palunid principality, as suggested above, then it would naturally have been represented by the Paluni prince cited as being present at the council, while the princes of Aršarunik' (the Mandakuni), Tmorik' (*Korduk'*), and of Zarawand-Hēr were probably all extinct by this time. The absence of the Princes of Anjewac'ik', Mokk' and, above all, of the two Arcrunid domains, however, is inexplicable unless the acts, as they have come down to us, are defective. Possibly, their absence may have been due to their having perhaps been nestorianizing principalities at this time as Adontz (Adontz-Garsoïan, 265) suggests.

Here, at Duin I in 505, the princely participants, who we must now examine, included representatives of the Gabeleank', Abeleank' and Hawnunik' families, who, all cadet branches of the Kamsarakans of Arsarunik', were doubtless in the company of the bishop of Aršarunik', a new see, who obviously represented the Kamsarakans and all of the three other related families. The Vahevuni are, again, present, and also the princes Jiwnakan, the latter absent from Duin I. Both doubtless counted the katholikos as their bishop since neither is known to have owned lands anywhere else in the country and both probably resided in Ayrarat.

DUIN II. More striking at Duin II in 555 is the absence of a much larger number of princes from principalities represented by bishops than

were absent from Duin I. Thus, again, not counting the lands known to be princeless, we find that there was no secular representation at Duin II from the principalities of Siwnik', Ałbak (Arcruni bishop I), Rštunik', Mardestan (Arcruni Bishop II), Mokk', Anjewac'ik', Artaz, Palunik', and Mehnunik', or from the two other new sees represented at the council by bishops: Gołt'n and Akē. The reason for the absence of these particular princes has already been divined by Adontz: since the Council of 555 was concerned with "Nestorian" tendencies on the part of certain sees—in particular those of Siwnik', Rštunik', Mokk' and the Arcrunid sees of Ałbak (Arcruni I) and Mardpetakan (Arcruni II)—the katholikos was forced to threaten excommunication to ensure the attendance of their bishops and, even then, not all were present. The absence of the princes of these lands—with the exception of Siwnik', all located in the south central part of Armenia—suggests their hostility to the council and, since it was not as important to the katholikos that the princes attend the council as long as their bishops presented themselves, these grandees, for reasons of old age, extreme youth, infirmities of one kind or another, or for some other reason thought to be valid, must have chosen to remain at home.

7) The *Acts* of the Council of Manazkert convoked in 726 contain the most complete list of the existing Armenian episcopal sees that we have for the period between the Arab invasions and the seventeenth century—a period of one thousand years. While only eight names of the most important participants are to be found in the Armenian version of the acts of this council, the complete list of the signatories is to be found in the Syriac chronicle of the Jacobite patriarch, Michael the Syrian (1166–99 = MS, pp. 496–500). Unfortunately, the patriarch's list is badly corrupted but it has been elucidated by Adontz and even more so by Markwart, who together have demonstrated that it had been used by the historian Uxtanēs of Edessa (*Uxtanēs Urhayaci* = UU) as the source for his list of the thirty episcopal sees said by him (falsely) to have been founded in Armenia by St. Gregory the Illuminator.

Curiously, although Adontz gives both the list of UU and that of MS, Adontz does not take the trouble to place them side by side so that the reader can (as he suggests) compare them easily for himself. Here follows the list of the eparchies to be found in MS's Syriac list together with Adontz's identification of them, identifications which he has based upon the eight surviving names in the Armenian acts of the council of

Manzkert, and in the list of sees preserved by UU. The second and third lists have been rearranged to follow the order found in UU (which has been treated at the master list), but are numbered in the order in which they appear in the original texts. Unfortunately, although Adontz makes a good case that UU used the acts of this well-known council of 726 in drawing up his list of the fictitious sees established by St. Gregory the Illuminator, MS's Syriac version of the names is so corrupt that only nineteen (and not twenty as Adontz states) of the thirty-one sees coincide with the thirty-one found in his text. I have indicated these nineteen with asterisks and Adontz's identification of eight of the remaining eleven with question marks.

## UXTANĒS

## COUNCIL OF MANAZKERT

	<i>Syriac Acts (MS)</i>	<i>Armenian Acts</i>
1. The Katholikos	1. The Katholikos	1. The Katholikos
2. Hark'	2. *Arkiws	2. Hark'
3. Ostan (Duin)	3. *Armn (Duin)	3. Ostan
4. Tayk'	6. *Ditpis	6. Tayk'
5. Sardal (Mardalik)	22. Mrina (Mrdin)?	
6. Aršamunik'	8. *Ašamunis	
7. Arcrunik'	13. *Artsrunis	
8. Siwnik'	10. 'Asibw (= *Sisagan/Siwnik?)	
9. Rštunik'	12. *Ereštunis	
10. Mokk'	24. *a vardapet	
11. Amatunik'	11. *Amatunis	
12. Basēn	5. *Basean	5. Basan ( <i>sic</i> )
13. Mamikoneank'	4. *Mamikonean	4. Mamikonean
14. Bagrewand	20. *Bagrevand	
15. Xorxorunik'	15. *Khorkhorunis	
16. Vanand	14. *Wanand	
17. Apahunik'	21. *Apahunis	
18. Aršarunik'	9. *Aršarunis	8. Aršarunik'
19. Gnunik'	17. *Gnunis	
20. Goł'tn	16. *Goł'tn	
21. Gardman?	19. =Bakratunis?	
22. Akē	26. (an archimandrite of Mak'enis?)	
23. Bozunik'	7. *Bezunis	7. Bznunik'
24. Erutak (Rotak)	18. *Rotakay	



- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 25. Syria (I)          | 32. =Sanasnayē?        |
| 26. Anjewac'ik'        |                        |
| 27. Palunik'           | 25. Suphrin?           |
| 28. Mehunik'           | 31. =Matnis?           |
| 29. Ehi                |                        |
| 30. Miwsasoreac'       |                        |
| (The Other Syria) (II) | 23. Arzōn?             |
|                        | 27. (an archimandrite) |
|                        | 28. (a vardapet)       |
|                        | 29. (a khorepiskopos)  |
|                        | 30. t-Aran? (=Taraun?) |

8) A few of these identifications are curious and, as elsewhere in his otherwise remarkable book, Adontz misses some other striking discrepancies. For example, he appears not to have noticed that Siwnik', listed by UU, is not found in the Syriac list of MS—at least not under that name—and he misses connecting it with Asbw(r)gn or Suphrim, the second of which he identifies, startlingly, as a corruption of Palunik' (!) which is also otherwise missing in MS. To my mind, Suphrim can only be Siwnik', while the see of Palunik' is perhaps represented by the monk Raphael or by one of the other lesser clergymen cited at the end of MS's list. The absence of a bishop from Siwnik' would be remarkable, indeed, for, as already noted, it was far and away the largest episcopal see in Armenia after that of the katholikos, himself. If it were indeed represented by a lesser cleric at Manazkert, it could only have been because the bishop, himself, was too ill or too aged to attend in person.

9) Also, in comparing these lists, Adontz notices the absence of the bishop of Arnay in UU and assumes that his see had been subsumed into that of Ehi. On the other hand, he notices the appearance of a hitherto unknown bishop of Rotakk', which see he considers to be a new one. The fact of the matter is that Rotakk' is an alternate name for the district of Sałamas (Sałmas/Salmast) which is precisely where the monastery of Arnay was to be found (JK lv). Rotakk', then, is not a new eparchy but simply the earlier see of Arnay under a more general designation than that of the monastery at which its bishop resided.

10) Similarly, I do not agree that the Other Syria (Syria II) of UU is to be identified by the presence of one of the lesser clerics of the list of MS. The list, for example, contains the name of a bishop of Arzōn whose see

Adontz identifies with Zarēhawan. Since we know, however, that an Armenian bishop of Arzon existed in this period, it seems logical to suppose that the bishop of Arzōn of MS's list corresponds to UU's "Other Syria", and that it is his missing Zarēhawan, if represented at all, that is the one represented by one of the lesser clerics.

These two 'Syrian' eparchies represent yet another discrepancy in the analysis of Adontz. As he has already pointed out in his comparison of the earlier lists, the bishop of Tmorik—one of the six new sees represented at the Council of 505—is to be identified with the bishop of the "Orthodox (*i.e.* monophysite) Syrians" sitting at the council of 555, where Tmorik' is otherwise not mentioned. Yet, later in his discussion of the episcopal lists of UU and MS, in which Syria is cited by the first writer but not by the second, Adontz identifies UU's see of Syria with MS's *Sanasnayē* (Arm.: *Sanasunk'* or later, *Sasun*), located in Aġnik', even though the latter is nowhere near Tmorik', which lay in Korduk'.

Clearly, Adontz has lost his way again in the thickets of his own argument. Indeed, as noted by Garsoïan in the *Editor's Preface* to her English translation, his book (p. XXVII), for all its brilliance, betrays certain signs of haste in its preparation. Certainly, if the see of Tmorik' of 505 is the see of Syria of 555, then Syria *tout simple* should continue to be the term for this eparchy, while the 'Other' Syria of UU (Syria II) must, as its name implies, be located somewhere else. Considering UU's Syria I to lie in Tmorik', I identify his Syria II with the *Sanasnayē* of the Syriac Acts of 726, *i.e.* the Armenian *Sanasunk'* (later: *Sasun*) located in the Sim-Sar Mountains south of Tarawn, which must be a new see that had recently emerged at this time. The reason for the creation of this new eparchy could have been the formation of a new principality in this region in the Arab period, and, indeed, such a princely state does appear here during this time ruled first by the Ćorduanelids and later by a branch of the Mamikonids (Toumanoff, 1990:457).

11) Finally, when comparing the two lists of 726—that of the Syriac Acts preserved by MS and the list as utilized by UU, Adontz noted that, besides the katholikos, there were thirty-one sees in the former, in other words, counting the katholikos, thirty-two sees existed in 726 as compared with twenty-eight represented at the Council of Duin in 555. As we have seen, the sees of Eli and Arnay represented at Duin III in 607 would, counting that of the katholikos, bring the list of Armenian episcopal eparchies to twenty-nine in the latter year (twenty-seven if we

omit Mananali and Arnay, which latter is the same as Zarēhawan). The two new sees in existence by 726 are, according to UU, Gardman and Syria II, the former being, however, a see of the Albanian Church and so not to be counted here; the latter alone being new—the *Sanansayē* of the Syriac list, as noted above, making twenty-eight. A second new eparchy in 726 is Ostan, which, meaning, as it does, 'court', can only refer to a special bishop of Duin distinct from the katholikos, just as Erevan has had a separate bishop distinct from the katholikos in our own time. This raises the total of Armenian ecclesiastical provinces or eparchies to thirty.

A third eparchy not found in the earlier lists, and here found only in the Syriac *Acts*, is *Asibw(r)gn*, which Adontz identifies with the Sep'akan or Mardpetakan of the earlier lists. Presumably, according to Adontz, these two sees, formerly one, were considered to be still one eparchy by UU and—perhaps erroneously—by MS. Actually, however, this explanation seems a bit strained and, as already noted, it is quite possible that Syriac *Asibw(r)gn* is to be identified with Siwnik' (Per.: *Sisakan*), and that *Suphrim* is to be sought elsewhere. Whatever the case, we shall not be far from the truth if we consider the total number of Armenian episcopal sees—including the katholikosal see, itself—to have reached about twenty-eight by the middle of the Arab period.

#### IV. The Growth of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy

As Adontz has shown, and as is clear from the consiliar lists, there was a slow but steady growth in the number of Armenian episcopal sees between the Council of Artašat in 450 and the Council of Manazkert in 726, so that their total number, counting the katholikos, rose from nineteen in 450 to twenty-four in 505, to twenty-six in 555, to twenty-seven in 607 and to c. twenty-eight in 726. It might be an interesting and instructive exercise to see if this growth can be explained by examining the nine new eparchies that appeared in this period and trying to determine the cause of their establishment. Let us take them, one by one, as they appear in the successive lists and see what can be seen:

1) Aršamunik'. At first glance there is no apparent reason for the appointment of a bishop to the principality of Aršamunik' for its ruling house, the Princes Mandakuni, are last heard of at the end of the fifth century. If they had no see in 450, why should one have been appointed by 505? This very disappearance of the Mandakuni, however, in fact offers us a perfect explanation, for after the house had ceased to exist, its

lands must have passed to some other owner. In this case, the new owner must have been the Armenian Church, which, naturally, would have appointed a bishop to the land to supervise its latest acquisition.

As to why the principality of Aršarunik' had no bishop when it was ruled by the Mandakunik', the only explanation is that its ecclesiastical requirements were met by a neighboring bishop, in this case perhaps the bishop of Tarawn, which adjoined Aršarunik' on the south.

2) Palunik'. There were, as we have seen, two branches of the Paluni family from which this principality took its name. The first and apparently the original line of the two was settled between Aršarunik' and Tarawn in the land that bore their name; the second, apparently, was settled later, but under circumstances unknown to us, to the east of Lake Van in a new district of Palunik', where it formed the principality that we have identified as Mehnunik'. We do not know exactly when the Princes Paluni vacated their original and ancestral lands for new domains elsewhere but, as we shall see, there is reason to believe that it must have happened sometime between c. 450 and c. 500. Eremyan (76) implies that the reason the first Palunik' does not appear among the districts of Armenia cited in the *AŠX* is because it was a part of Tarawn (and had passed to the Mamikonids of Tayk' in 428 at the same time that they acquired Tarawn and which bordered on Palunik', to the south), while Toumanoff (212, n. 240) notes that the Paluni house disappeared after 505, but this seems an unlikely reason because the *AŠX* invariably ignores the principalities of Armenia *per se* while listing, precisely, their districts alone. In my view, the omission of the original Paluni land of Palunik' from the *AŠX* is an accidental omission, pure and simple—an oversight by one of the earliest copyists of the ms. of the text. What probably happened was that for ecclesiastical purposes, Palunik', being a small principality, was under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Tarawn but, that sometime between 450 and 505, the house of Paluni lost this land to the Armenian church, which, as in neighboring Aršarunik', immediately appointed a bishop to govern it.

3) Mehnunik'. The sudden appearance of the eparchy of Mehnunik' at the exact period of the transfer of residence of the Princes Paluni from their original domains into new ones in the basin of Lake Van supports our explanation for the emergence of a bishop in the first Palunik'. As I have already demonstrated, above, in my view, the new Palunid domains to the east of Lake Van comprised the three contiguous

districts of Bodunik', Palunik' and Mehnunik' in the valley of the little Marmet River, and a bishop must have been appointed to the Paluni family at this time with the title "bishop of Mehnunik'", by which name the new Palunid domain must have become known (perhaps consciously to avoid confusion with the earlier Palunik' that bore the same name). While this hypothesis cannot be proved, it does explain in a reasonable way the simultaneous emergence of the two new sees of Palunik' and Mehnunik' within the framework of the evidence available to us. We should recall that the period 450–484 was that of the protracted wars between the Armenians and Sasanid Iran, wars that were attended by innumerable upsets and dislocations within the Armenian federation. Thus, while we cannot explain the migration of the Paluni princes from West to East in the fifth century, this move was probably connected in some way with the other upheavals taking pace in Armenia at this time.

4) Gnuunik'. When we are told on one hand that the Princes Gnuni reigned in Alovit and on the other that Alovit was one of the royal lands set aside for the support of the Arsacid royal cadets, we are being forced to deal with an apparent contradiction. The AŠX however, makes it clear that there were actually two Alovits, side by side, and that the boundary of the later greater lands of Turuberan and Vaspurakan ran between the two. One of these Alovits, the one on the east that adjoined Arberani, which we may call "East" Alovit (which was once also a domain set aside for the royal cadets) belonged to the crown. The other, adjoining Apahunik', which we may call "West" Alovit, must have been the one that belonged to the Princes Gnuni, who also held Calkotn directly to the north of it, which Prince Gnel of the Arsacids inherited from his mother's family, the Gnunids (MX III.23). The sudden appearance of a bishop of Gnuni in 505 is difficult to explain. The family was prominent in Armenia before that date and its decline did not begin until well into the Arab period. The only possible explanation that can be surmised is that, as a branch of the Arcruni family, the Gnunids were originally served by the bishop of the neighboring Arcrunid land of Mardpetakan, but that by 505, they had asserted as their prerogative the right to a bishop of their own. We simply do not know, but a possible solution may lie buried undetected in our sources for the history of this time.

5) Zarawand-Hēr. This principality, lying by the northwest corner of Lake Urmia, was lost by Armenia in 363 and so must not have been

originally included within the hierarchical organization of the Armenian church, which was formed after that date. That, ethnically, the area was predominantly Armenian, however, seems beyond doubt, and the appointment of a bishop to safeguard the spiritual well-being of its Armenian population seems a logical development after the Armenians had been guaranteed religious freedom by the Persians by the Treaty of Nuarsak of 484.

6) Tmorik'. The appearance of a bishop of Tmorik' lying within the old principality of Korduk' (and perhaps by now coterminous with it), seems logical in the light of the simultaneous emergence of an episcopal see in Zarawand-Hēr just examined, and supports the explanation we have just given for the establishment of the latter eparchy. Korduk' had been lost by the Armenian kingdom at the same time as Zarawand-Hēr (363/387) and its Syro-Kurdish population, largely Nestorian after 431, was served, as we have seen by the Nestorian bishop of Bēth Qardu, a suffragan of the metropolitan of Nisibis. The area must have contained a fair number of Armenians, however, especially in its western sector, and the Armenian bishop of Tmorik'—probably residing in a monastery near the village of T'man—must have been appointed to serve their spiritual needs. These would be the "Orthodox Syrians" (read: "Monophysite Armenians" of Syriac-speaking Tmorik'), whose bishop is cited at the second council of Duin in 555. In later centuries, we find the Bagratids ruling Tmorik' and it is possible that they held it this early and that the bishop of Tmorik' was appointed to this branch of the family in its capacity of princes of Tmorik'.

7) Ehi and Arnay first appear at the Council of 607. Both are located in the territory of Parskahayk' so that these eparchies must represent the division of the earlier diocese of Zarēhavan or Rotak into two smaller ones, each with its seat at a homonymous monastery; Ehi in the south; Arnay in the north.

8) Sanasunk', appearing for the first time in 726 must in some way be connected with the emergence of the Ćorduanelid principality in Tarawn and Sanasunk'. Unfortunately, this principality is not known until c. 900 (Toumanoff 1990:457) and we cannot be certain that it can be traced much earlier.

## **V. Territorial Analysis of the Armenian Eparchies**

It remains now to determine the territorial jurisdictions of the Armenian bishops in the period under discussion, i.e. between the end of

the Armenian monarchy in the early fifth century and its restoration towards the end of the ninth. What we must ascertain is the location and extent of the territory included in each eparchy, for not only is it logical to suppose that each part of Armenia was included within a particular jurisdiction of a particular bishop, but an analysis of the distribution of the various lands of Armenia between the different episcopal sees cannot help but be instructive in any attempt to understand the political organization of the country once its monarchy had come to an end and its princes had passed under direct Persian suzerainty. Let us take each eparchy as found in the list of bishops in attendance at the council of Artasat in 450 and see if we can determine its territorial extent. We shall then examine the later sees that appear in attendance at the councils of 505, 555 and 726.

1) Ayrarat. As Adontz has shown, the large Ayrarat depicted in the AŠX, which included no less than twenty-two districts, was much larger than any indications we have from earlier sources as to the area encompassed within the former royal domains. In my opinion, the Ayrarat of the AŠX represents the Byzantine province of Lower Armenia (*Armenia Inferior*) founded in 591, whose nucleus was composed of what had once been the lands owned outright by the Armenian Arsacid kings. After the fall of the monarchy, these royal lands were divided up among the house of Kamsarakan and its various cadet branches, related, as Kamsarakans were, to the Arsacid dynasty. By taking the Ayrarat of the AŠX as our base and subtracting those lands within it that belonged to houses other than the Kamsarakans and their cadets (and to the few others whose lands we know lay within the royal domains), we can, I believe, discover what the original lands of the royal family comprised and, hence, of what the original katholikosai see of Ayrarat consisted.

Thus, if we subtract the eight lands of Nig, Basean, Vanand, Bagrewand, Całkotn, Varažnunik', Ašoc' and Urcajor, all of which, with the exception of Całkotn (a part of Bagrewand), existed as principalities while the Arsacids reigned, as well as the Kamsarakan lands of Širak and Aršarunik' or Erasxajor (the latter composed of the four lands of Aršarunik'/Erasxajor, Abełeank', Gabełeank', and Hawnunik'), which, again as shown by Adontz, had once formed part of the original Kamsarakan house (before its division among its cadet lines); and if we also subtract from the Greater Ayrarat, both Aracoy Kołmn, and the Plain of Šarur which were geographically and (being princeless,

probably politically) a part of the adjoining principality of Urcajor, which separated them from the rest of Ayrarat, we find that, of the twenty-two districts of the Greater Ayrarat cited by the AŠX, only seven must have formed the royal domains of the Arsacid kings (Aragacotn, Maseac'otn, Cakatk', Kogovit, Kotayk', Mazaz, and Ostan Hayoc').

Now the original jurisdiction of the katholikos as bishop of Ayrarat ought obviously to have been over these six districts alone but, since Nig, Ašoc', and Urcajor, though principalities, had no bishops of their own, while the Kamsarakan principalities of Širak and Aršarunik' (the latter in its greater sense) had none until 555, it is probable that these lands too came under the jurisdiction of the katholikosal see as well. Calkotn, we know, had belonged at one time to the house of Gnuni but, inherited by Prince Gnel from his Gnuni maternal relatives (MX III.23, it must have passed to the royal domains after Gnel was executed by King Aršak II in c. 359 and so would have formed a part of the diocese of Ayrarat, the katholikosal see, as well. As far as ecclesiastical organization is concerned then, the greater Ayrarat of AŠX appears at the council of 450 in the form of four eparchies: Vanand, Bagrewand (with Aršarunik', Gabeleank', Abeleank', Hawnunik' and Širak) and Basean, with the remaining fourteen of its twenty-two districts coming under the direct jurisdiction of the katholikosal see and its area must have been c. 21,825 sq. km./8,427 sq. mi.

In discussing the eparchy of Ayrarat, it is interesting to note that the original seat of the chief bishop of Armenia—bishop of Ayrarat though he might have been styled—was at Aštišat in [West] Tarawn, which district belonged outright to the Gregorid family in its capacity as hereditary occupants of the chief episcopal throne, as opposed to such other lands (e.g. Mardali), which belonged to the church at large but not to the Gregorids as family domains. With the death of Chief Bishop Isaac, however, the last male Gregorid, the private lands of the family, including West Tarawn, passed (through the marriage of Isaac's only child, a daughter Sahakanoyš, to Hamazasp Mamikonean) into the hands of the Mamikonean house. Although the great ecclesiastical conclave of 450 was still held at Artašat, by 484 the Holy See had removed to its ecclesiastical (as opposed to its formerly personal) lands in Ayrarat, remaining at the city of Duin until 898.

2) Siwnik'. Listed second after Ayrarat in the *Acts* of the council of Artašat, this major see was obviously coterminous with the principality



of the same name, the largest princely state in Armenia. If Siwnik' at this time comprised the same territory as it does in the AŠX, then the bishop of Siwnik' governed an ecclesiastical province consisting of twelve districts totaling some 15,237 sq. km./5,883 sq. mi.

3) Arcrunik'. It has become increasingly clear from modern investigations, that the two lines of the Arcruni family were sovereign over, respectively, the original family domains of Greater and Lesser Ałbak (the two together probably being the source of the plural form *Ałbakk'*, occasionally found in the sources), and of the large mountainous territory to the northeast of lake Van known as the Mardpetakan and largely inhabited by Mardian, i.e. Median (proto-Kurdish?) tribes. Since the Mardpetakan seems to have consisted of the districts of Naxčawan, Mardastan, Čuašrot, Garni, T'ornawan, Ałan-rot, Arišakovit, Krčunik', Kulanovit, and *Bun* ('original') Mardastan, after subtracting these lands, we may safely assume that the original see of the Arcrunik' must have comprised the combined districts of 1) Greater and 2) Lesser Ałbak, the adjoining districts of 3) Gazrikan, 4) Taygrean and 5) Varažnunik', 6) the principality of Anjaxi jor, which also adjoined the Arcruni lands and which had no bishop of its own; and, finally, the non-contiguous districts of 7) Tosp, 8) Artawanean/Artašesean, 9) Eruandunik' and 10) Arčišakovit. Based on Eremyan's estimates for the sizes of these districts, the ecclesiastical province would have included some 6,385 sq. km./2,465 sq. mi.

4) Tarawn. By the see of Tarawn we must understand not merely the original church lands of Aštišat (West Tarawn), received by the Armenian church from the Vahevuni, hereditary high priests of Armenian paganism, nor the district of Tarawn comprising East and West Tarawn (which eventually belonged to the Mamikonean family and which is the Tarawn depicted in the AŠX), but rather a much larger ecclesiastical province including, besides the whole of Tarawn, also the adjoining principalities of Aršamunik' and Palunik' as well as the tribal territory of the Xoyt'. This eparchy also included the district of Aspakuneac'or, which appears to have formed a part of West Tarawn. Not until 505 do Aršamunik' and Palunik' emerge as distinct eparchies. Until that time, the see of Tarawn must have included in excess of c. 7,695 sq.km./2,971 sq. mi.

5) Rštunik'. This principality consisted of a nuclear district at the southwest corner of Lake Van, together with certain otherwise princeless

districts which adjoined it. To the west of Rštunik' lay the district of Erewark' and the principality of Bznunik', the latter extinct since the mid-fourth century when it passed to the church. Given the small size of Bznunik' proper, and the large number of monastic foundations in Erewark', it seems likely that Erewark' was a part of Bznunik' and not of Rštunik'. Bounded on the south by the principality of Mokr', Rštunik' must have included only those princeless districts that lay to the east of it, namely Bužunik', Arnoyotn and perhaps Gukank'. Toumanoff (213) thought it likely that the Rštunids owned the district of Tosb with the city of Van. In my view, however, Tosb (with Van) probably belonged to the house of Eruanduni, whose domains would have been improbably small for a former royal house if confined solely to Eruandunik'. With the extinction of this house in 451, it seems more likely that its domains would have passed to the more powerful house of Arcruni, its neighbors to the east rather than to that of the Rštunids. Certainly, Van was one of the chief Arcruni centers at a later date. Adding to Rštunik' the districts of Arnoyotn, Bužunik' and Gukank', the principality probably comprised some 1,775 sq. km./685 sq. mi. and this would have been the extent of its diocese.

6) Manjkert (*Hark'*). Manazkert (from an earlier *Manawazakert*) as a see comprised the earlier principality of Hark', which had been the domain of the ancient house Manawazean, extinct in the fourth century and whose lands were thereafter the property of the church. Although our sources vary as to whether or not the town of Manazkert was in Hark' or Apahunik' (it lay on the border between the two and Eremyan puts it in Apahunik'), the fact remains that Apahunik' formed another eparchy altogether, so that Manazkert is surely to be placed in Hark'. The diocese probably also contained the adjoining district of Kori, which was geographically a part of it. Its area with Kori would have been c. 2793 sq. km./1,078 sq. mi.

7) Bagrewand. The diocese of Bagrewand would have been coterminous with the land of that name comprising two valleys from which flow the major headwaters of the Aracani River (*Arsanias*, Murad-su), but also, apparently, included the entire Kamsarakan domains of Širak and Aršarunik' (the latter including Aršarunik' proper, Gabeleank', Abeleank', and Hawnunik'). If the small, adjoining region of Całkotn (675 sq. km./261 sq. mi.) still belonged to the Gnunids, the area of the diocese would have been 13,905 sq. km./5,369 sq. mi. If Całkotn had been

annexed by the crown after the execution of its owner Prince Gnel, in 359, who, as we have seen, had inherited it from his mother's family, the Gnunids, then the eparchy probably included Całkotn as well and this would increase its size to c. 14,580 sq.km./2,258 sq. mi.<sup>10</sup>

8) Bznunik'. We have already discussed this diocese. It lay on the west shore of Lake Van and probably included Erewark', which adjoined it on the southeast. Since all the other surrounding lands were included within one principality or another, Erewark', is the only other land that Bznunik' could have held. It would have increased the Bznunid domains—and the size of the corresponding eparchy—to c. 1,325 sq. km./512 sq. mi.

9) Basean or Mardalik'. Adontz counts these as two dioceses. In my list above they are counted as one. Its situation, however, is moot. Occasionally, as Adontz has noted, we hear of a bishop of Basean; at another of a bishop of Mardalik'. Again, there is one bishop of both districts; yet again a bishop for each simultaneously. The explanation for the continual changes is probably due to the sheer size of the see which led to certain katholikoi dividing the eparchy into two dioceses, for not only did it include Mardali and Basean, but apparently also the large princeless districts of Dasnawork', Tuaracatap', and Dalar. Unless the last two territories formed part of the principality and diocese of Apahunik', which adjoined them on the south and which is geographically feasible, the total area of the eparchy would have been c. 8,860 sq. km./3,421 sq. mi. The see also appears to have included the large principality of Varažnunik', which was apparently lost to the Varažnuni family under circumstances unknown to us, and this would have increased its area to 10,860 sq. km./4,193 sq. mi. Altogether, Basean-Mardalik', with Dasnawork', Tuaracatap', Dalar, and Varažnunik', if indeed they were all part of the same diocese, should have been the fifth largest eparchy in the Armenian church at that time.

10) Mardastan (*Mardpetakan* or *Sep'akan*). This large territory was a royal domain but, placed, as it was, under the direct control of the high chamberlain (*hayr mardpet*) of Armenia, it had its own bishop (residing in the city of Načawan, a second early municipal see) until the Arab period when the bishop moved his seat to the otherwise unattested town of Hamboyrazan (TA III.25). The diocese would have included the entire

<sup>10</sup> MX (III. 23) refers to the "Mountain of Šahapivan" rather than to Całkotn, but this mountain and homonymous village lay in Całkotn (Eremyan: map).

territory of the Mardpetakan, with its ten districts of Mardastan, *Bun* 'original' or 'basic' Mardastan (*Marducayk*), Garni, T'ornawan, Krčunik', Kulānovit, Ałand-rot, Gazrikean, Taygrean (*Tankriayn*), Čuaš-rot, Gołtn, and Naxčawan, and probably included the principality of Enc'ayaci or Anjaxijor, which was located among these other districts and which otherwise had no bishop of its own. Its area was thus some 15,000 sq. kms./5,791 sq. mi. It is possible that the diocese of the Mardpetakan included the eastern lands of Gabiṭ'ean, Marand (*Bakran*) and Parspatunik', all of which, however were lost to Iran c. 363. If so, its size would have to be raised to 26,930 sq. km./10,398 sq. mi. making it far and away the largest diocese in the Armenian church.

11) The diocese of Vanand would have been coterminous with the land and principality of that name, and would have had an area of c. 4,725 sq. km./1,824 sq. mi.

12) The diocese of Mokk' corresponded to the principality of Mokk' with its six tiny districts. Area: c. 2,962 sq. km./1,144 sq. mi.

13) The diocese of Anjewaci' corresponded to the principality of that name, with an area of c. 2,525 sq. km./1,014 sq. mi.<sup>11</sup>

14) The diocese of Tayk' consisted of the five districts of the principality of that name (Koł, Čakk', Ok'alē, Azordac'por and Arseac'por), and apparently included the adjacent principality of Bołxa (with its three lands of Bołxa [proper], Berdac'por and Partizac'por), which otherwise had no bishop of its own. These eight lands are included in a 'greater' Tayk' by the AŠX. Total area: 10,179 sq. km./3,930 sq. mi.

15) Tar[u]beran, a diocese which Adontz felt, probably correctly, must have corresponded to the see of Xorxorunik' found in the lists of 505 and 555. Area: c. 1,000 sq. km./386 sq. mi.

16) Mananałi consisted of the district of that name and occupied some 2,775 sq. km./1,071 sq. mi. (though, as noted above, it may not actually have been a see within the Armenian church after c. 390).

<sup>11</sup> The principality of Mokk' (Gk: *Moxoēnē*, Syr.: *Bēth Maksaye*), also ceded to Rome in 298 and back to Persia in 363, somehow gravitated back into the Armenian orbit under circumstances unknown to us whereas Ałjnik' and Korduk', we know, never did. Although forming, like Beth Arzōn (Arm.: *Ałjnik*?) and Bēth Qardu (*Korduk*) one of the five eparchies of the metropolitanate of Nisibis and so possessing a sizeable Nestorian element in its population, Mokk', as we have seen from the above list, also had an Armenian bishop whose presence is attested at the Armenian councils of Artašat and those of Duin I and II.

16a) Mardalik' (see *supra* at 9).

17) Amatunik', must correspond to the principality of Artaz, the Amatuni domain, c. 2,225 sq. kms./859 sq. mi.

18) Apahunik', equaled the district and principality of that name, c. 2,375 sq. km./917 sq. mi.

The later dioceses added by 505, were:

19) Aršamunik' corresponds to the district and principality of that name. Prior to 505, it may have come under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Tarawn (or perhaps of that of Hark?). Area: 2,180 sq. km./ 842 sq. mi.

20) Palunik' corresponded to the original principality of that name lying northwest of Tarawn and west of Arsamunik' and probably came under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Tarawn until it was established as a separate see, apparently about the same time as that of Aršamunik'. Area: c. 475 sq. km./183 sq. mi.

21) Gnunik', located in the district of [West] Añiovit and perhaps previously a part of Apahunik' (Adontz-Garsoïan, 209), had an area of 1,575 sq. km./608 sq. mi.

22) Zarēhawan. This diocese probably corresponded to the old principality of Zarawand-Hēr, which included the districts of Zarēhawan, Zarawand and Hēr, and probably the other six, more southernly, of the nine districts of the land of Parskahayk' described in the AŠX. This principality left the orbit of Armenia for that of Iran after c. 363 and the nine lands of Parskahayk' probably corresponded to the entire principality as probably did the diocese of Zarēhawan. Area: c. 11,010 sq. km./4,250 sq. mi.

\*23) Tmorik'. The exact location and size of Tmorik' are subject to debate (for which see, Hewsen 1988–89). In general, however, the area occupied the northern part of the valley of the Eastern Khabur River to the east of the old Armeno-Kurdish principality of Korduk', which was annexed by Rome in 298 and by Iran in c. 363. It is possible that the Armenian diocese of Tmorik', however, corresponds to the whole of the Syrian eparchy of Bēth Qardu, *i.e.* to Korduk'. If so, its size would still be uncertain because we do not know if Bēth Qardu corresponded solely to the area of the old principality of Korduk' or to other lands in Kurdistan to the east of it, *i.e.* Korčayk'. The area of the old principality of Korduk', however (which doubtless included the three small districts of Upper, Lower and Middle Kord[r]ik), was c. 8550 sq. km./3,301 sq. mi.

24) Mehnunik', consisted of the three tiny districts of Mecnunik', Palunik' and Bogunik' for a total area of c. 950 sq. km./267 sq. mi.

\*NOTE: Mananahi does not appear in the list of 505 so that the actual number of dioceses in 505 was twenty-four in spite of the addition of six new sees to the original nineteen of 450.

Those new eparchies added by 555, included:

25) [25] Aršarunik', a new eparchy, separated from Bagrewand as Adontz thought (Adontz-Garsoïan, 20-9), would have included Gabeleank', Abeleank', Hawnunik', and Širak for a total area of 8630 sq. km./3,332 sq. mi.

26) According to MX (II.8), the princes of Gołt'n were a branch of the house of Siwnik', which may explain why they did not have their own bishop prior to 555; they would have come under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Siwnik'. Siwnik', however, evinced strong separatist tendencies by 591 and is treated as a separate country from Armenia by ps.-Zacharias of Mitylene (II.vii) and Procopius (*Per.*, II.xv,1) even earlier in the sixth century, and this may have led the Armenian Church to assign a bishop to Gołt'n, which remained a part of Armenia throughout this period.

27) [26] Akē, a new see corresponding to the tiny principality of that name, it had probably been under the bishop of the Arcruni family until this time, next to whose much more extensive lands it lay. Area: c. 250 sq. km./97 sq. mi.

Those new eparchies appearing at the council held in 607:

28) [27] Eli, a division of 22.

29) Arnay, a division of 22.

Since both of these new dioceses lay in the territory of the former Parskahayk' and the diocese of Zarēhawan is missing in the list, it seems logical to conclude that the old diocese of Zarēhawan had been divided into two eparchies. If this be the case, we would have to eliminate Zarēhawan from the total number of sees by 726, reducing them to twenty-eight. Arnay probably corresponded to the northern half of Parskahayk' (*i.e.*, to the districts of Zarawand, Zarēhawan, Hēr and Arnay), for a total of c. 2975 sq. km./1,149 sq. mi.; Eli to the southern half (Tamber, Ayli/Eli or Kuričan, T'rabī District, Mari District and Arasx or Ovēa), for c. 7425 sq. km./2,867 sq. mi. since Arnay corresponds to the earlier see of Zarēhawan (and Mananahi disappears from the lists), the total number of sees in 605 was twenty-seven rather than twenty-eight.

The new diocese appearing at the Council of Manazkert in 726:

30) [actually, 28] Sanasnayē, the old Armenian district of Sanasunk' (later: *Sasun*) comprising c. 2400 sq. km./927 sq. mi.<sup>12</sup>

## VI. Territorial Holdings of the Armenian Church

While through its episcopal sees the Armenian church had ecclesiastical jurisdiction over every square kilometer of Armenia, the lands that actually belonged to the church at any given time were obviously only a fraction of the total land in the country. Still, the church was a vast landowner and it would be of the greatest interest to know just what lands and how much in square miles or kilometers the Armenian church actually owned. According to the *BP* (V.13), formerly attributed to P'awst'os Buzand (Faustus of Byzantium?), but now understood to have been the work of an unknown author of the late fifth or early sixth century, King Tiridates of Armenia had given vast lands to the Armenian church upon his conversion to the Christian faith early in the fourth century. Most of these lands would appear to have been simply those transferred to the church from the earlier pagan religious establishment, (*i.e.*, the lands of the house of Vahevuni and those of the great temple-states located in various parts of the country), while others, we know, were lands taken from princely houses which for one reason or another had become extinct (*e.g.*, the principalities of Basean, Bznunik' and Hark'). But the *BP* is more specific than this. In one chapter (IV.14), it mentions the hereditary domains of the Chief Bishop Nersēs (353–c. 373) as having comprised fifteen districts, six of which it gives by name, adding that the others were either in or near these. The lands cited by name are Ayrarat, Daranaḡi, Ekeleac', Tarawn, Bznunik' and Cop'k'. Now there is no question that the lands ceded to the church were composed of specific districts and not simply of miscellaneous domains consisting of estates, villages, farms, etc., which is what comprised the church lands by the end of the Middle Ages. Fortunately for us, we are very well

<sup>12</sup> The nearest documents we have found which approximate a list of the Armenian eparchies after 726 are a list of the bishops who attended the coronation of Leo as King of Armenia in 1198, found in Smbat (35); an as yet unpublished list of the bishops attending the enthronement of the katholikos at Ejmiacin in 1441, found at the end of certain mss. of *T'ovma Mecobeci* (*Thomas of Mecob*); and the list in Richard Simon (*De Moni*) gleaned from a conversation with Bishop Oskan on the latter's visit to France c. 1660. None of these lists is complete or pretends to be. For the distribution of Armenian sees within Armenia, Georgia and Albania at the various epochs for which such data is available, see Hewsen, TAVO maps.

informed on the names of the nearly 200 districts which formed the fundamental political and administrative units of ancient Armenia, and reasonably well-informed as to the locations of most of them. We are able, moreover, thanks to the AŠX and to indications in other sources, to determine to a certain extent what districts were included in the other, larger ones. With this information as our guide, we are in a position to elaborate on the *BP*'s list of ecclesiastical holdings in its first reference:

1) By Ayrarat, *BP* does not mean to have us understand that the Armenian Church owned all of the royal domain of Ayrarat, for if this were to have been true, there would have been nothing left to support the royal family during the more than a century that it had left to rule after the conversion of the country to Christianity. Part of Ayrarat is what the text means, and in Ayrarat the domains of the church appear to have consisted of Bagrewand, with its former pagan shrine of Bagawan, the location chosen by St. Gregory the Illuminator for the baptism of the king, the royal family and the court, and which subsequently became a great monastic center.

2) Daranaŋi must be understood to have meant the entire district as the former temple-state centered at the temple of Aramazd at Ani-Kamax.

3) Ekeŋeac', likewise would not be the simple district of that name centered at the town and temple of the goddess Anahit at Erēz, but must have included the adjacent and princeless district of Muzur or Menjur.

4) By Tarawn, once again, we are not to understand all of Tarawn, the western half of which, centered at the castle of Ołakan, belonged to the house of Sıkuni and later to the Mamikoneans with their seat—apparently—at Muš, but rather the western half centered at Aštisat which had been the nucleus of the domains once owned by the house of Vahevuni, hereditary high priest of the Armenian pagan religious establishment.

5) Bznunik', taken from the Bznuni family by the crown after the treason of its prince, Daŋabē, in the fourth century (*BP* III.8), was at first simply appropriated to the royal fisc. Subsequently, however, it appears as the property of the Armenian church as it does in the list of *BP*. East of Bznunik' lay Erewark', a princeless district that could have belonged either to the principality of Rštunik' to its east, but which on the grounds of physical geography, and its large number of monasteries, is more



likely, as we have seen, to have been part of Bznunik' and so would have gone with it to the church at the same time.

6) Finally, *BP* (IV.14) mentions Copk' as having been a part of the church's lands, but this could not have been the entire principality of that name which belonged to its own princely house until the time of Justinian (c. 536) but is probably to be understood as a part of Greater Copk', which was vast in size and which, moreover, had a separate section extending north of the Tigris round about the city of Np̄ret, Nrkert or Martirosac' kałak' (Gk.: *Martyropolis*), and which extension might have been the ecclesiastical territory within Copk'. Since Copk' lay outside of the Armenian kingdom after 298, it is interesting that the Armenian church owned estates (*BP*, V. 27–28) within it even though its bishop presided under the direct authority of the imperial church rather than through the intermediacy of the katholikos of Armenia as did the bishops whose sees lay within the kingdom. Probably these lands represented gifts of the princes of Copk', who we know from elsewhere in *BP* continued to play a role in Armenian affairs just as the other rulers of principalities lost to Rome in 298 did, even though no longer officially within the Armenian state. This situation would have been perfectly feasible since there was, as yet, no formal break between the Armenian church and that of the Empire, and the king of Armenia was, himself, a vassal of Rome.

Thus, examining the six districts cited by name in the *BP*, we find that we can easily raise their number to eight by including Mn̄jur/Mēnjur and Erewark'. But can we do better than this and discover the exact fifteen specified by the *BP* as forming the total church lands in Armenia? *BP* we may note, omits all mention of 9) Derjan, the old temple-state centered in the great temple of Mihr at Bagayarič. Adjoining Ekeleac' on the east, this district could easily be described as lying in its vicinity as all of the church lands not mentioned by name in *BP* are supposed to have done. 10) *BP* also omits mention of Hark' among the church lands, *i.e.*, the former Manawazeen principality centered in the town of Man[aw]az[a]kert, but which we know had passed to the church for it tells us so (III.4). In addition, this text makes no mention of 11) Mardaḡi, another church land, which, as Adontz has shown, probably included the adjoining, princeless districts of 12) Dasnawork', 13) Tuaracatap' and 14) Dalaṛ. Adding these additional six districts to the eight named by the *BP*, raises the number of church lands to fourteen. Can we identify the

remaining one? I believe that we can. There is one other major district not named by the *BP* even though we know that it was the property of the church from the time of the extinction of its princely house during its feud with the Manawazeans; that of their rivals the Orduni, namely 15) the principality of Basean (or *Basēn*), which, again as Adontz has shown, was adjacent to Mardali, lying to its south, the latter being also a church land, as we have just seen. A quick glance at a map will show that all of these districts (Derjan, Mardali, Dasnawork', Tuaracatap', Dalař, Basean/Basēn, together formed a great block of territory in the center of Armenia stretching from the church lands in Ararat to those in Upper Armenia (Ekeleac', Daranali, etc.). In this way, we have, with a fair degree of certainty, been able to identify the fifteen ecclesiastically owned districts referred to by the *BP*.

As a final effort to milk the ecclesiastical lists of all the information they contain, we may take the fifteen church lands and by subtracting the lands added to them by the monarchy, determine the holdings *grosso modo* of those of the pagan religious establishment. The lands granted to the church by the Arsacids were 1) the Manawazean principality of Hark', 2) the Orduni principality of Basean and 3) the Bznuni principality of Bznunik', which probably included 4) Erewark'. Thus, the original lands held by the Vahevuni must have been eleven in number: 1) Bagrewand, 2) Mardali, 3) Dasnawork', 4) Tuaracatap', 5) Dalař, 6) Derjan, 7) Ekeleac' with 8) Muzur/Mēnjur, 9) Daranali, 10) Copk' and 11) [West] Tarawn (*Aštiřat*). Taking Eremyan's estimates for the size of these districts, the pagan religious establishment must have held some 25,000 sq. km./9,550 sq. mi. out of the total territory of the Armenian kingdom as it existed at the time of the conversion prior to 298 (which Eremyan estimates in the period 37–387 A.D., as comprising some 285,195 sq. km./115,133 sq. mi.). While the high priest of pagan Armenia undoubtedly presided over this entire agglomeration, it is unlikely that the house of Vahevuni owned all of it. Probably the temple-states were autonomous in their individual districts (as were those at Pontic Comana, Zēla and elsewhere in Cappadocia), so that the Vahevuni lands *per se* probably consisted of Mardali, Dasnawork', Tuaracatap', Dalař and *Aštiřat*. Interestingly, with the sole exception of *Aštiřat*, where the Vahevuni apparently resided, all of these lands were contiguous and formed a neat block of some 7,735 sq. km./2,986 sq. mi. in the west

central part of the kingdom, directly adjoining the royal lands of Ayrarat on the east and of Karin on the northwest.

### Excursus I. The Albanian Church in 500

From the text of Moses of Dasxuren or Kałankatuk' (*Movsēs Dasxuranc'i* or *Kałankatuaci*) it is clear that prior to the Arab invasions, the number of Albanian episcopal sees amounted to nine. This is a very low figure compared with the c. thirty eparchies of Armenia, yet it is difficult to doubt that if there had been any additional ecclesiastical provinces, MD would surely have mentioned them at least once if only in passing. Doubtless, the relatively small size of Albania compared with Armenia accounts for its church having had less than a third as many eparchies.

When we begin trying to locate the Albanian sees, however, their small number begins to appear even less unlikely, and we can begin to detect a pattern in their arrangement. The see of 1) Baxalať, for example, must have been centered north of the Alazani River in the direction of the Albanian frontier with Iberia (East Georgia), where the town of Baxalať was located in the district of Beł. The second see, 2) that of Šakē, obviously centered at the well known town of the same name (now: *Nukha*), lay due east of Baxalať, while the bishop of 3) Kapałak, which lay east of Šakē, must have presided over the district of the city of that name, the former capital of Albania. Of the remaining six eparchies, five lay south of the Kur, one centered at 4) Partaw, the new capital of Albania from the mid-fifth century, one at 5) Gardman, centered at the castle of that name to the northwest of Partaw, one at 6) Amaras, to the south of Partaw, one at 7) Mec Kuenk' (or *Mec Kotmank'*), west of Partaw, and the one centered at 8) Yašu or Yašu Xoš to the northeast of Partaw.

Taken together, these five Albanian episcopal provinces south of the Kur seem to coincide rather neatly with the natural divisions of this part of the country, while, if we keep in mind that the lowlands of northern Albania, *i.e.*, the lands lying along the left bank of the Kur were arid and thinly populated, then the row of three episcopal sees in the foothills of the Caucasus appears to correspond to a logical division of the country as well. There remains of the Albanian eparchies then, only the diocese of 9) Bałasakan to account for, and, of the natural regions of Albania, only the territory between Kapałak and the Caspian Sea.

Now it has been customary to identify the district of Bałasakan with the large province of Paytakaran lying south of the Arax River before its juncture with the Kur, but Ulubabyan and Haruťyunyan have recently

demonstrated that this is an error on Eremyan's part, and that Bałasakan is to be identified with the Plain of Bazkan—*i.e.* of Ba[la]s[a]kan—north of the Arax precisely in the flat country between Kapałak and the Caspian Sea. If Bałasakan did in fact lie in this area (and there is no reason to doubt it. See *Elr s.v.* "Balaskan"), then our picture of the Albanian episcopal provinces is complete: There were four rather than three large dioceses north of the Kur and another five large ones lying to the south. Unlike the ecclesiastical situation in Armenia, where the bishops were, for the most part, attached to the great princely families, or that which obtained in Iberia, where they were assigned to a number of monasteries or to a few large towns, the Albanian church appears to have possessed a diocesan structure that was almost entirely territorial in nature, the country being divided into logical blocks of territory more or less equal in size, each including a number of districts and each centered at a specific town, or, more rarely, a monastery. This arrangement, so unusual in Caucasia, would seem to reflect the relatively weak position of the Albanian nobility compared with that of Armenia, and the relatively small number of important monasteries that existed there compared with the situation in Iberia.

Although we cannot be exactly certain which districts of Albania were comprised in which diocese, the picture that appears to take form as we examine the question seems to suggest the following arrangement;

North of the River Kur:

- I. The diocese of Baxałať: the districts of 1) Ełni/Xeni, 2) Beł and 3) Kambečan.
- II. The diocese of Šak'ē: 4) Šak'ē, 5) Getaru, 6) Hołmaz, and 7) K'alađašt.
- III. The diocese of Kapałak: 8) Ostan (Kapałak), 9) Hambasi, 10) Geławu, and 11) Hejjeri.
- IV. The diocese of Bałasakan: 12) the large district of that name.

South of the River Kur:

- V. The diocese of Amaras: 13) Miws ('Other') Haband, 14) Sisakan (Lesser Siwnik'), 15) Muxank', 16) Harčlank'.
- VI. The diocese of Mec Irank' (Greater \*Arank'): 17) Parsakank', 18) Plank', 19) Mec Arank', 20) Vayoc'jor, 21) Berdajor.
- VII. The diocese of Gardman: 22) Gardman, 23) Kołť, and 24) Kusti-Parnes.
- VIII. The diocese of Yašu(-Xoš): 25) Šakašēn, 26) Tus-kustak.

IX. The diocese of Partaw (whose bishop was the *katholikos* of the Albanian church after the move to Partaw): 27) Uti Aranjnak, (Uti Proper) 28) Aran-rot, 29) Afluē, 30) Tri, 31) Rot-Parsean.

A glance at a map of the Albanian districts—of which at least four are now available—will show that the above arrangement, however, provisional, is at least a logical interpretation of the data at hand.

### Excursus II. The East Georgian Church in 500

Nothing illustrates more sharply the difference between the Iberian (East Georgian) and Armenian states than does the organization of their respective churches in the first few centuries after the conversion of these countries to Christianity. With all that they had in common—their social structures, their institutions, their customs and laws, and their common heritage of Iranian influence on every aspect of their cultures—there was yet much that distinguished the two neighboring lands. Language, for one thing, of course; ethnic origin for another. But in particular, there was the disparity in their physical sizes with the concomitant greater power of the Iberian monarch over his tiny kingdom and his ability, at least in this period, to keep the great lords of the country under his control. Thus, in regard to the organization of the Iberian church, we see that, contrary to the situation in Armenia, where bishops were appointed to serve as “court prelates”, as it were, to the various major Armenian princely houses, in Iberia the bishops were assigned to specific localities. There must have been some logic to this distribution, however, and, again, as in Armenia, every part of the realm must have been included within one eparchy or another.

We are fortunate in that we have two lists of the East Georgian bishops in this period that concerns us. First, one listing those bishops who attended the synod of Vałaršapat in 496, whose names have been preserved for us by UU, and second, one of those who took part in the First Council of Duin convoked a decade later. This list, too, is preserved by UU, but we have a much earlier version of it in the BL, a compilation of ecclesiastical correspondence dating from the fifth through the thirteenth centuries. In addition to these two sources, we also have in the *Georgian Annals* (Kart’lis C’xovreba), a list of bishops supposedly sent out to the various eparchies by King Vaxt’ang Gorgasal (c. 446–522) after the consecration of the archbishop Peter as first *katholikos* of the Iberian church in 467. While the first two lists obviously reflect the same state of

affairs, namely the distribution of episcopal sees c. 500, the "King Vaxt'ang" list, as we may call it, differs from these in several notable particulars. Let us put these lists side by side using the one from the council of Duin as the master since it is the longest, and rearranging the other two series of bishops to conform to its order but numbering both series in the order in which they appear in the lists.

VAXT'ANG	VAĻARŠAPAT	DUIN I 505/6	
	496	BL	UU
	Mc'xe'ta	1. Mc'xe'ta	
	Royal House	2. Royal House	
	Asuriale	3. Samuri-al	Assuri-ale
	Timoel	4. Tumasu-ēl	Timu-el
5. Bolnis		5. Bolnis	Boniay
	Srt'av	6. Ort'av	Srdav
6. Rust'aw	Ruzt'av	7. Us-tav	Rust'av
	Tiflis	8. Tp'lis	Tiflis
4. Manglis	Manlik	9. Manglis	
	Ruis	10. Marvel	Marveli
	Samt'av	11. Sam-t'av	Samt'avay
	Adune	12. Adsu-ēl	Adsun-eli
	Sarust?	13. Sarust'iel	Sarut'
	Kumurdo	14. Kučordi	Kumurt
		15. Kisdael	
		16. Cilkan	
		17. Midam-il	
		18. Połdb-il	K'olkdnia
	P'ort'	19. P'ort'	
	Kasta?	20. Kasdir	Kast
	Astermiul	21. C'erm-il	Astermiul
11. Agarak/ Xunani	Hnarakert	22. K'unarakert	Hunarakert
	Tavse	23. Tavs	
	K'orzan	24. K'orzona	K'orzan
1. Ahis			
2. Artan			
3. Cunda			
7. Ninocminda			

8. Ceram
9. Čeleti
10. Xornabuji
12. Nik'oz

From the above lists we see that there were essentially twenty-four eparchies in the Iberian church in c. 500, as opposed to only c. twenty-five in Armenia—a much larger country—at the same time, and that, while several sees were not represented at Vałaršapat in 496, the lists of 505/6 and 496 do not contradict each other. Of course, we can not be certain that there were not a few other sees not represented at either conclave, and this may be the explanation for eight of the twelve sees (numbers 1,2,3,7,8,9,10 and 12) supposedly existing in the time of the consecration of the Katholikos Peter (467). Still, the contradiction between the King Vaxtang list and the later two is striking. Either the number of eparchies was greatly increased between 467 and 496, or the King Vaxtang list is a projection into the past of a situation that may have existed at a later time. Or, again, and this may be more likely, that the King Vaxtang list is not meant to be a complete list of Iberian eparchies but merely a late attempt to give a hoar antiquity to certain sees prominent at the time that the list was committed to writing (eighth century). Let us examine these sees and see how many can be identified and what their identification and location can tell us about the organization of the East Georgian—Iberian—church at the turn of the sixth century. Fortunately, we have the names of many of the East Georgian sees from other sources which enable us to correct the badly corrupted names in the lists, while through a process of elimination the sees that we know existed, when matched against the remaining names in the list, helps us to correct a few of the others.

1) Mcxet'a. This was, of course, the see of the katholikos of Iberia and remains such until the present day (although modern katholikoi reside in Tbilisi).

2) The royal house. In addition to the katholikos, himself, the Iberian church obviously appointed a separate 'court prelate' with episcopal rank to minister to the day-to-day spiritual requirements of the royal court wherever it happened to be residing.

3) Samurial (*Asuriale*, *Assuri-ale*). Cited in both consiliar lists immediately after the see of the katholikos and that of the royal court,

this prelate must have been an important one but the name of the see is unclear. I take it to represent "of Ac'kuri" an important fortress (doubtless surrounded by a considerable town) on the upper reaches of the River Kur in the district of Samc'xe.

4) Tumasu-ēl (*Timoel, Timu-el*). Again this bishop appears to have been an important one but the name of his see is equally unclear. I read it as "of Tmogvi" another important fortress on the upper reaches of the River Kur.

5) Bolnisi. Here we are on firm ground for Bolnisi is a well-known town and was the site of an early and important monastery in the district of Bolnap'or.

6) Ortav (*Srt'av, Srdav*). This toponym shows how badly some of these names have been mutilated in the transition from Georgian to Armenian and through the errors of successive copyists working with toponyms that they had never heard of. Urtav, of course, is the town of C'urtavi.

7) Ustav (*Řust'av*). This is another particularly corrupt reading for the otherwise well-known city of Rust'avi on the north (left) bank of the Kur southeast of Tbilisi in the district of Kxoeti.

8) Tplis, i.e. *Tbilisi/Tiflis*. Quite apart from the bishop of the royal court, who must have traveled from place to place with the court and so have been frequently absent from the capital, the city of Tbilisi had a bishop of its own, who must have presided over the entire district of Paruar in which the capital was located.

9) Manglis (*Manlik*). Here we are on firm ground again for Manglisi, like Bolnisi, was an early and important monastic center in East Georgia in the district of Mangleac'por. Again, as with Bolnisi, the bishop was probably the abbot of the local monastery.

10) Marvel (*Marveli* i.e. 'he of Ruisi', *Ruis*). The town and monastery of Ruisi are located on the north (left) bank of the Kur upriver from Tiflis and Mc'xet'a.

11) Sam-t'av (*Samt'avay*). This is the important monastery of Samt'avisi located northwest of Mc'xet'a.

12) Adsu-ēl (*Adune, Adsun-eli*). Another very badly corrupted name, I read it as 'of Ateni' since the town of Ateni, lying in the district of Tanis-xevi, has a very fine church dating from this period and it was certainly an episcopal see in later centuries. This identification, while likely, can not, however, be considered certain.

13) Sarust'iel (*Sarust?, Sarut'*), the monastery of Zarzma?



14) Kuj'ordi, probably the monastery of Kačareti.

15) Kisdael, possibly the monastery of Giši in Hereti?

16) Cilkam, surely the monastery of C'ilkani, north of Mcxe'a.

17) Midam-il cannot be identified.

18) P'oldb-il (*K'olkdnia*) is surely the important monastery of Bobde in Hereti.

19) P'ort'. This toponym is well-preserved and is that of another important monastery. P'ort'a is not to be identified with the monastery of Šatberdi as Salia thought, however.

20) Kasdir (*Kasta?*, *Kast*). Although this name has obviously been corrupted, it is nevertheless rather easy to identify as being the result of a confusion between the Armenian letters *η*, and *ρ*, so that the name of Kaspi, an important town on the Kur in the district of Mcxe'a, has been rendered both as *Kasd* and *Kast*.

21) Cermil (*Astermiul*). The monastery of Čeremi?

22) Kunarakert. The well-known (but still not exactly localized) fortress of Hunarakert or Xunarakert.

23) Tavs (*Tavr*). this is a variant of the Armenian orthography *Tawr* for the Georgian *Tori*, an important fortress in the district of the same name in the duchy of Samc'xe.

24) K'orzona (*K'orzan*), the monastery of Nikozi?

Later in the Middle Ages, it became the custom to grant episcopal rank to abbots of major monasteries, so much so that, besides the bishops of Tbilisi, Urbnisi, Rust'avi, Ruisi, Artahan, Xunani/Xunarakert, Dmanisi, Nuxp'ato/Šakē, Lagodexi, Belokani, and Qabala/Kap'alak' (the latter in Sharvan) and Kari/Kars and Valaškerti/Vačaršakert (*Alashkert/Eliširt*) (the last two in Armenia), in time almost all the bishops in East Georgia had their seats at monasteries (in Inner K'art'li: at Šio Mqvim, Samt'avrisi, C'ilkani, Alaverdi, Nekresi, Čeremi, and Vezini; in Hereti: at Xornabuji, Bodbe, and Giši; in Upper Iberia: Ac'xuri, Tmogvi, Erušet'i, Zarzma, Kumurdo, Cqarostave, Črc'qabi, Anč'a, Axiza, Tbet'i, Kumurdo, Tmogve, and Dadešeni; in southern K'art'li: at Bolnisi, Manglisi, and Calka; and in Tao/Tayk': at Išxani and Bana), often quite close to one another, and it is difficult to determine, in the present state of our knowledge, exactly how far the territorial jurisdiction of each see extended.

**Excursus III: The Church in West Georgia**

Very little is known of the organization of the church in West Georgia (Kolkhis, *Lazika*) but a bishop of Phasis attended the Council of Nicaea in 325 and this see became a metropolitanate under whose jurisdiction there emerged suffragan bishops at Pityous (Geo.: *Bičvinta*, now: *Pitsunda*), Siganeon (*Igani*), Abessenos (*C'aisi*), Rhodopolis (*Vardisc'ixe*), and later, in the sixth century, at Petra/Ioustiniana (*C'ixisjiri*). In the later Middle Ages, the practice of granting the episcopal title to abbots took root in West Georgia as it had in the East and, besides the archbishops at Bičvinta and P'ot'i (*Phasis*) and the earlier bishops of Igani (*Siganeon*), Vardc'ixe (*Vardisc'ixe/Rhodopolis*), and C'ixisjiri (*Petra/Ioustinioupolis*, later *Kaġ'ac'ixe*), there were more recently established bishops at the monasteries of Dranda, Mok'vi, Bedia, Xop'i, Cagere, Nikorcminda, Č'qondidi (= the bishop of Kuṭaṭ'isi/Kuṭ'aisi), Ĵumati and Ozurget'i. The development of the West Georgian church reached its apogee in the period 1380–1657, when the archbishop of Bičvinta held the rank of *katholikos* so that is was not only completely autonomous from that of East Georgia, but was headed by a prelate of the same supreme rank. In 1657, the seat of this *katholikos* was transferred to the great monastery of Gelati near Kuṭ'aisi. The *katholikosate* was suppressed in 1814 after the Russian annexation of the West Georgian kingdom of Imeret'i (*Imeretiya*) four years before.

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